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ANECDOTES

OF

POLITE LITERATURE.

In FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON,

Printed for G. BURNET, at Biſhop Burnet's Head, in the Strand. MDCCLXIV.

ANECDOTES

OF

POLITE LITERATURE.

SECT. I.

Of COMEDY.

IS it not ſurprizing, that in a nation which abounds with original characters more than any other in the world, there ſhould be ſo few good comedies? Yet this is the caſe in England. In how ſmall a compaſs may we reckon up our beſt? It ſhould ſeem that the fault of the generality of our comic writers, is their not introducing the originals which

they may ſee every day, if they have penetration as well as wit. A jealous huſband, a fop, a coward, and a bully may compoſe an entertaining comedy, by the help of ſome intereſting ſituations and abundance of wit; but the excellence of ſuch a piece will be far inferior to one in which an original character is introduced, and diſplayed in thoſe ſituations which will beſt ſet off its ſingularity. The originality of Moroſe throws an air of novelty over a whole comedy, which otherwiſe is a very tedious piece. I do not diſpute but that common characters may form an excellent comedy; but an uncommon one will ever be moſt proper, and, if wrote with equal abilities, will undoubtedly be the fineſt piece. Falſtaff, that character ſo admirably pourtrayed and ſupported, is original, and one of the beſt on our ſtage; but its merit conſiſts

in thoſe ſtrokes which diſplay its ſingularity. There is an agreeable extravagance in the character of Bobadil; it always entertains, and the chief reaſon is its being original. With all the abſurdity we ſee in Bayes, yet its originality juſtifies the outrée.

If we enquire into the reaſon of the paucity of the original characters in our comedy, we ſhall find it is owing to the want of genius in our poets. A man of wit may write an entertaining comedy, but it muſt be a man of genius to draw an original character. An excellent comedy muſt be wrote philoſophically.

I know few pieces more entertaining than Congreve's; that vaſt flow of wit which every character pours forth, amuſes the reader, though it deſtroys the natural.

Had he wrote a piece in which were introduced a ſet of wits, whoſe different ſpecies of wit and humour were all marked and diſtinguiſhed according to their reſpective characters, then we ſhould not have been diſguſted with too much wit. But when a variety of characters, even footmen, converſe in ſtrings of witty repartees, there can be no character preſerved. In the Suſpicious Huſband, Ranger is a rake with wit and vivacity; but had the poet given wit alſo to Strictland, it would have been all unnatural. If Vellum had had three or four witty repartees added to his part, it would have deſtroyed it entirely. Angelica, in Love for Love, if it was not for ſome ſmart anſwers of hers, would be far from appearing a wit: She is a lady of a very amiable character, but does not ſeem one of any great vivacity; yet Congreve has given her ſome ſpeeches

which

which have far too much wit for her character. In Act II. Scene III. ſhe ſays to old Foreſight,

But let me be gone firſt, and then let no mankind come near the houſe, but converſe with ſpirits and the celeſtial ſigns, the bull, and the ram, and the goat. Bleſs me! there are a great many horned beaſts among the twelve ſigns, uncle. But cuckolds go to heaven.

Foreſight. But there's but one virgin among the ſigns, ſpitfire, but one virgin.

Angelica. Nor there had not been that one, if ſhe had had to do with any thing but aſtrologers, uncle.

Foreſight is an old fool, that would never have ſaid a good thing in his life, had his character been painted naturally. But all are wits with Congreve; Sir Sampſon Legend is a wit too.

Sir Sampſon. I have known an aſtrologer made a cuckold in the twinkling of a ſtar; and ſeen a conjurer that could not keep the devil out of his wife's circle.

Foreſight. What, does he twit me with my wife too? I muſt be better informed of this *(aſide.)* Do you mean my wife, Sir Sampſon? Though you made a cuckold of the king of Bantam, yet, by the body of the ſun ——

Sir Sampſon. By the horns of the moon, you would ſay, brother Capricorn.

Foreſight. Capricorn in your teeth, thou modern Mandeville: Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou lyar of the firſt magnitude. Take back your paper of inheritance; ſend your ſon to ſea again: I'll wed my daughter to an Egyptian mummy, ere ſhe ſhall incorporate with a contemner of ſciences and a defamer of virtue.

There is ſomething extremely clever in ſuch witty dialogues, and every body muſt certainly be entertained at reading them; but yet in comedy they are pernicious, unleſs entirely characteriſtical. In the piece which I am now mentioning, one of the wittieſt anſwers ever given, is put into the mouth of the footman Jeremy.

Tattle.

Tattle. I hope you are ſecret in your nature, private, cloſe, ha?

Jeremy. O, Sir! for that, Sir, it is my chief talent: I am as ſecret as the head of Nilus.

Tattle. Ay? who's he, though? a privy counſellor?

Jeremy. Oh! ignorance! *(aſide.)* A cunning Egyptian, Sir, that with his arms would overrun the country; yet nobody could ever find out his head-quarters.

There are a thouſand ſuch inſtances to be met with in every ſcene almoſt of this play. Had Foreſight's character been better preſerved and not ſpoiled by wit, it would have been original enough. Ben's part is one continual ſtring of witty alluſions to his ſea-life, while he is truly (in other reſpects) a mere ſea-calf, a great tar-barrel, as Miſs Prue calls him; there is not one character in the piece without a flow of wit in their parts; and yet ſeveral of them are as far as poſſible from being wits.

The Way of the World is a much better comedy, and indeed the maſter-piece of Congreve. The plot is a very good one, and moſt of the characters will admit a profuſion of wit much better than thoſe of Love for Love. There appears to me more of originality of character in this piece than in any of his others. Mirabell is a true fine gentleman, of a very good underſtanding; what wit the poet has thrown into his character, is far from being ill-placed. Mirabell is a very well drawn character; I know of none that is like it on our ſtage; there is a proper mixture of good-ſenſe, good-nature, wit, and a certain eaſineſs of converſation, which marks the gentleman. Millamant's is alſo a very good portrait, and differs from the herd of fine ladies and coquets that diſgrace our theatre. We every where ſee ſhe has a very good underſtanding;

ing, though ſhe is ſo fine a lady, and the vivacity of her character makes her wit appear natural. We do not therefore wonder at that witty anſwer of hers to Mirabell:

Sententious Mirabell! Prithee do not look with that violent and inflexible wiſe face, like Solomon dividing of the child in an old tapeſtry hanging.

Lady Wiſhfort's is a very comic character, extremely well ſupported, and finely ridiculed. Sir Wilful Witwou'd would have been more natural, had he not ſeveral witty ſtrokes in his part, much too good for the man; unleſs, indeed, he is one of thoſe ſtrange fellows who never ſay a good thing but when they are drunk; the following ſtroke is above Sir Wilful:

The ſun's a good pimple, an honeſt ſoaker; he has a cellar at your Antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your Antipodes. — Your Antipodes

podes are a good raſcally ſort of topſy-turvy fellows.—If I had a bumper, I'd ſtand upon my head, and drink a health to 'em. — A match, or no match, couſin with the hard name?

His forgeting Millamant's name is extremely natural; but the reſt is not in character. Witwou'd and Petulant have nothing ſtriking in their characters; they are introduced for little purpoſe, unleſs to ſhew the poet's wit, for their's does not ſit eaſy on them. Waitwell, the footman, according to cuſtom, is moſt abominably witty.

Lady. Starve him gradually, inch by inch.

Waitwell. I'll do't. In three weeks he ſhall be barefoot; in a month, out at the knees in begging an alms — he ſhall ſtarve upward and upward, till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a ſtink, like a candle's end upon a ſave-all *.

There

* If a fondneſs for ſhewing wit in his writings is ſometimes the occaſion of a perſon's finding many

There is nothing in the reſt of the characters; however, Mirabell's and Millamant's, I think, may fairly lay claim to originality, though they are not of that undoubted kind which are ſo ſtriking in ſome comedies.

The caſe is pretty nearly the ſame with regard to the minds and characters of men, as with reſpect to their countenances. Man's face is compoſed of the ſame parts, of two eyes, one mouth, &c. and yet men's countenances are all different, becauſe they are differently com-

many beautiful thoughts and happy expreſſions; it alſo helps him to many that are falſe and improper. When an author is in queſt of the brilliant, it too often happens that he prefers it to the ſolid; mixes low points and turns with ſtrokes really ingenious; paſſes from the fine to the tinſel, from the real beauty to that which is only the appearance of it.

Trublet's Eſſays, p. 325.

poſed.

poſed. Now the characters of men are not only differently compoſed, but, moreover, it is not always the ſame parts, that is, the ſame virtues, the ſame vices, the ſame projects, that enter into the compoſition of their character; wherefore the characters of men ought to have a much greater difference and variety than men's faces. To have a diſtinct and juſt idea *

* Pour démêler ce qui peut former un caractere, il faut être capable de diſcerner entre vingt ou trente choſes que dit, ou que fait un homme, trois ou quatre traits qui ſont propres ſpécialement à ſon caractere particulier. Il faut ramaſſer ces traits; & continuant d'étudier ſon modele, extraire, pour ainſi dire, de ſes actions & de ſes diſcours les traits les plus propres à faire reconnoître le portrait. Ce ſont ces traits qui ſeparés des choſes indifferentes que tous les hommes diſent & font, à peu près les uns comme les autres, ce ſont ces traits qui rapprochés, & réunis enſemble, forment un caractere, & lui donnent, pour ainſi dire, ſa rondeur theatrale.

Réflexions Critiques, tome i. p. 129.

of

of what can form a character, requires a capacity of diſcerning three or four touches that belong to a man's peculiar character, amongſt twenty or thirty things that he ſays or does in common with the reſt of mankind. One muſt collect theſe touches, and, purſuing the ſtudy of one's model, extract as it were from his actions and diſcourſes, ſuch ſtrokes as are propereſt for conveying a knowledge of the portrait. Theſe are the ſtrokes, which, ſeparated from ſuch indifferent things as all men ſay and do pretty nearly alike, and afterwards drawn and collected together, conſtitute what we call a character, and give it, in its manner, its theatrical finiſhing. All men appear alike to limited capacities; to people of a better underſtanding, they all ſeem different; but every man is an original to a poet born with a comic genius.

La nature féconde en bizarres portraits
Dans chaque ame eſt marquée à des differens traits;
Un geſte la decouvre, un rien la fait paroître,
Mais tout mortel n'a pas des yeux pour la connoître.
Boileau Art. Poet.

As our poets then are not born with that genius which confers the neceſſary penetration to diſcern the peculiar traits in a character, our comedies muſt want original portraits. A man may poſſeſs a vivacity of imagination, without being endued with the faculty of inventing, which in fact is genius; the former will enable him to write a witty comedy, but it is the latter that forms original characters. Theſe concluſions are natural, ſince it requires a large ſhare of penetration to dive into the characters of men, and penetration is the effect of genius *. Congreve

* Pour penſer, il faut être homme de genie; pour arranger penſées, il ſuffit d'être homme d'eſprit,

greve was a man of an amazing lively wit, but he wanted the art of painting

ſprit, de goût, & de bon-ſens. Les ouvrages methodiques ſont moins rares que les ouvrages beaucoup penſées.

Eſſais de Trublet, tome iv.

And lord Kaimes juſtly diſplays the great abilities neceſſary for compoſing a genteel comedy with characters truly original. " But if a lively picture even of a ſingle emotion require an effort of genius, how much greater muſt the effort be to compoſe a paſſionate dialogue, in which there as many different tones of paſſion as there are ſpeakers? With what ductility of feeling ought a writer to be endued, who aims at perfection in ſuch a work; when, to execute it correctly, it is neceſſary to aſſume different and even oppoſite characters and paſſions, in the quickeſt ſucceſſion? And yet this work, difficult as it is, yields to that of compoſing a dialogue in genteel comedy devoid of paſſion; where the ſentiments muſt be tuned to the nicer and more delicate tones of different characters. That the latter is the more difficult taſk, appears from conſidering that a character is greatly more complex than a paſſion; and that paſſions are more diſtinguiſhable from each other than characters are. Many writers accordingly,

ing a variety of truly original characters.

Moliere is the greateſt comic writer the world ever produced. He was the inventor in France of a new ſpecies of comedy. The world was a ſtranger at that time, ſays the abbé du Bos, to that noble comic kind of writing, which ſets true but different characters againſt one another, ſo as to cauſe a reſult of diverting incidents, though the perſons never affect any pleaſantry. — This noble Frenchman abounds in original characters; his genius enabled him to be natural in his portraits without injuring his originality *.

There

accordingly, who have no genius for characters, make a ſhift to repreſent, tolerably well, an ordinary paſſion in its plain movements."

Elements of Criticiſm, vol. ii. p. 155.

* Rouſſeau pays a juſt tribute to the memory of this matchleſs Frenchman, and draws a pa-

There are many characters in ſeveral Engliſh comedies, which have not the entire

a parallel between him and his ſucceſſors. Quant à la comédie, il eſt certain qu'elle doit repréſenter au naturel les mœurs du people pour lequel elle eſt faite, afin qu'il s'y corrige de ſes vices & de ſes défauts, comme un ôte devant un miroir les taches de ſon viſage. Térence & Plaute ſe tromperent dans leur objet; mais avant eux Ariſtophane & Ménandre avoient expoſé aux Atheniens les mœurs Athéniennes, & depuis le ſeul Moliere peignit plus naïvement encore celles des François du ſiecle dernier à leurs propres yeux. Le tableau a changé; mais il n'eſt plus revenu de peintre. Maintenant on copie au théatre les converſations d'une certaine de maiſons de Paris. Hors de cela, on n'y apprend rien des mœurs des François. Il y a dans cette grande ville cinq ou ſix cent mille ames dont il n'eſt jamais queſtion ſur la ſcene. Moliere oſa peindre des bourgeois & des artiſans auſſi bien que des Marquis; Socrate faiſſoit parler des cochers, menuiſiers, cordonniers, maçons. Mais les auteurs d'aujourd'hui, qui ſont des gens d'un autre air, ſe croiroient deſhonorés, s'il ſavoient ce qui ſe paſſe au comptoir d'un marchand ou dans la boutique d'un ouvrier; il ne leur faut que des interlocuteurs illuſtres &

entire conſent of the public to their originality. Sir Baſhful Conſtant, in the Way to keep Him, I have often heard quoted rather as a jumble of extravagant abſurdity than an original character: I own it appears to me truly original. The objection which is generally made to it, is its being too ridiculous to be natural, and that ſuch a man never exiſted. This is the ſtrangeſt ſuppoſition in the world; I believe there are many who would find originals to this copy even among their acquaintance: They may not, perhaps, ſee the folly of which Sir Baſhful is guilty, in ſuch glaring colours as Mr. Murphy

ils cherchent dans le rang de leurs perſonnages l'élévation qu'ils ne peuvent tirer de leur génie. Les ſpectateurs eux-mêmes ſont devenus ſi délicats, qu'ils craindroient de ſe compromettre à la comédie comme en viſite, & ne daigneroient pas aller voir en repréſentation des gens de moindre condition qu'eux.

Julie, tome ii. p. 169. Amſt. edit.

has

has painted it; but frequently may we meet with the foible ſtrong enough to be the ground-work for ſuch a character. A poet would not find the taſk of ridiculing the vices and follies eaſy enough, if he was never allowed to ſtretch a little upon nature: He ought to throw them into the moſt ridiculous light, that his ſatire may be attended with the better effect. Falſtaff, perhaps, is the beſt drawn comic character on our ſtage; and yet the objection made againſt Sir Baſhful Conſtant will alſo be good, if urged againſt the extravagance of Falſtaff; for I am perſuaded that it would be a moſt difficult taſk to find an exact Falſtaff in the world; but we may diſcover in many men thoſe vices and ſtriking follies which are ſo admirably blended and ridiculed in Shakeſpear's inimitable portrait *. The

* When Moliere wanted to paint a man-hater, he did not look out for an original, of which his

Way to keep Him will furniſh us with another original character, and very well drawn, though it is not ſo ſtriking a one as Sir Baſhful; I mean Lovemore. I do not know I ever met with his character on our ſtage before. Many of the ſtrokes which form it, have often been painted, but as they are mixed in Lovemore, they

character ſhould be an exact copy; he had then made but a picture, a hiſtory; he had then inſtructed but by halves: But he collected every mark, every ſtroke of a gloomy temper that he could obſerve among men. To this he added all that the ſtrength of his own genius could furniſh him with, of the ſame kind; and from all theſe points, well connected and properly diſpoſed, he drew a ſingle character, which was not the repreſentation of the true, but the probable: His comedy was not the hiſtory of Alceſtes, but his picture of Alceſtes was the hiſtory of miſanthropy, taken in general. And by this means he has given much better inſtruction than a ſcrupulous hiſtory could poſſibly have done, by only relating ſome ſtrictly true ſtrokes of a real man-hater.

Batteux's Principles of Literature, vol. i. p. 19.

form

form a piece which is original, and has great merit.

The ridicule of comedy may eaſily be miſapplied. Nothing ſhould be repreſented on the ſtage that debaſes virtue and ennobles vice: and as it ought to point out the abſurdity of follies and foibles, by diſplaying their effects under ridiculous circumſtances; ſo the infamy of vice ſhould be rendered deteſtable by the poignancy of the comic ſatire. So careful ought a poet to be in this part of his province, that it is dangerous in him to turn into ridicule thoſe vices that are nearly allied to virtues; becauſe, although the penetrating part of mankind may be able to make the proper diſtinction, yet the generality will not. "Il eſt dangereux, ſays the abbé de Trublet, de tourner en ridicule des défauts a des vices

voiſins de la vertu. Le trait deſtiné au vicieux va pencer le vertueux. La comedie du Tartuffe a donné lieu à une infinité de railleries & de jugemens téméraires contre des gens de bien. Défiez-vous des dévots, dit un libertin ; ils reſſemblent tous au Tartuffe de Moliere.

It is alſo a great fault to paint a bad man with qualities which leſſen our ſenſe of his vices ; and yet nothing is more common than this miſtake. If there is any fault in the moral of the Diſcovery, it is in the character of Lord Medway ; ſo vile a member of ſociety ought not to have been painted with thoſe good qualities, which even draws pity from the audience: We cannot but admire the frankneſs with which he owns and repents ſome of his crimes, and pays the juſt

tribute to the noble virtue of his ſon; but theſe ſtrokes only ſerve to leſſen the horror which we ought to have at the thought of his vices; and thus raiſe in us two contrary ſenſations, which deſtroy each other.

The ſame remark will appear ſtill more juſt, if we conſider the character of Ranger. I know few more pleaſing to an audience, or more intereſting, from that generoſity, frankneſs, good-nature, and vivacity, which appear in him; but what a number of vices are blended with theſe good qualities! and by being thus intermixed with virtues, it is impoſſible to perceive at firſt the bad tendency of his diſpoſition; thoſe pleaſing traits in his character only cover the rake, who laughs at every tie which the laws or humanity place as bars to his paſſions, and who

even in the very piece attempts to become an adulterer. Were the vices in Ranger's character painted in their proper lights, we ſhould deteſt inſtead of liking him; And this ſhews how extremely wrong it is to make ſuch a mixture of qualities, as to have moſt of the attention which the play raiſes, carried towards the worſt character in it.—Yet, faulty as it is in this reſpect, Ranger is certainly an original character; all his vices and good qualities are mingled naturally enough, and he is no common rake, but has ſeveral traits which diſtinguiſh him in a particular manner from the generality of debauched young fellows.

When comedy is made uſe of to ridicule the vices and follies of the world, its effects muſt be good; to ſet thoſe characters which we ought to imitate in an

an engaging light, and contrary ones in a ridiculous ſituation, muſt ſtrongly repreſent the advantage of the one, and the folly of the other. Etheridge, either from the natural want of morals in his diſpoſition, or an ignorance of the true end of comedy, painted no characters that were worthy to be imitated; but cloathed his vicious ones in the beſt colours he could, compatible with their vice: This conduct, which rendered vice amiable in the eyes of the ſpectators, baniſhed the very ideas of morality; and ſurely ſuch pieces cannot improve the manners of the times.

How contrary is the conduct of Sir Richard Steele and Addiſon? The comedies of the former do honour to the ſtage, from their excellent morality; and in the Drummer, which is one of the beſt

beſt on our theatre, though it did not ſucceed, we ſee the ſame vein of religion and humour that diſplays itſelf in Addiſon's proſe writings. What ridicule could be more appoſite or pointed than the character of Tinſel? We ſee the ridiculous folly of a free-thinking fop painted in the moſt ridiculous colours. This comedy has a great deal of original merit; it is compoſed in quite a different taſte from the generality of them on our ſtage; there are no unneceſſary characters introduced, merely to ſhew the author's wit — and yet no comedy in the Engliſh language has more natural and genuine humour, or the characters drawn with more propriety, or better ſupported.

Johnſon underſtood the drama perfectly, and has left us ſome excellent comedies.

medies. In his Every Man in his Humour, we ſee jealouſy painted in the moſt natural manner, and forming one of the beſt drawn characters on our theatre. Kitely is a perſonage admirably adapted to comedy, and cannot but give riſe, in its oppoſition to others of a different caſt, to many diverting incidents. The poet has alſo ſhewn us, in this comedy, that he knew the proper objects for his ridicule: The unravelling diſplays the abſurdity of a man's giving into groundleſs jealouſy that is but formed on ſuſpicion. In his Silent Woman alſo, Moroſe is an admirable character; and the abſurdity of his ſtrange foible ſet in a humourous light: but the play in general is extremely tedious.

The Conſcious Lovers is extremely perfect in reſpect to morality; but it is a par-

a particular ſpecies of comedy, that has almoſt as near a connection with tragedy. There is no mortal that is not moved to the higheſt degree on Sealand's diſcovering Indiana to be his daughter; the proof of this being a tragic ſcene, is the ſenſation it raiſes in the ſpectators, which has no ſort of connection with a comic one. I have often ſeen an audience in tears at the repreſentation of that ſcene. Yet, as the very end of all dramatic poems is to purge the paſſions and mend the heart, by touching the fancy, the Conſcious Lovers muſt neceſſarily have great merit; for no comedy can have a finer effect. The faſhionable vices and follies are there ridiculed in the moſt proper manner, by drawing characters ſuch as they ought to be; we cannot go from the repreſentation of this piece with more corrupt morals than when we came, the caſe with many

many others on our ſtage: On the contrary there are, I hope, but few minds which it will not refine. The end of a comedy is anſwered, if it cannot do any harm, but may do a great deal of good. If I read a piece with deſign to laugh much, it ſhould not be the Conſcious Lovers, for there are many that contain infinitely more wit, and many more comic ſituations. The plot of the Conſcious Lovers can hardly be called a comic one.

As I have mentioned this comedy, I cannot help giving an obſervation or two on the reſt of Sir Richard Steele's pieces, which are much inferior to it. The Funeral, in point of morality, paints vicious characters in a proper light, and rewards virtuous ones; but it has no original ſtrokes, no uncommon characters (unleſs

Lord

Lord Hardy's may be reckoned one) no comic ſituations, and has little or no buſineſs in it; in reſpect to ſentiments, they are adapted to the characters, ſuch as they are drawn, but contain little that is ſtriking. The part of Puzzle is an excellent ſatire on the lawyers.

The Tender Huſband has yet leſs merit; there is not one character that is ſtriking: A country clown, and a girl whoſe head is filled with romances, are perſonages which I ſhould not have expected Sir Richard Steele would have given ſo large a place to, in a comedy. Inferior writers have recourſe to ſuch portraits, becauſe they do not poſſeſs genius enough to obſerve others more original, and that contain more characteriſtic ſtrokes. In ſhort, I ſee little in theſe celebrated comedies, that by any means

anſwers

anſwers the reputation they have hitherto poſſeſſed.

The Lying Lover is much ſuperior to either of them; contains more humour, more vivacity, and more buſineſs. There is ſomething original in the character of Bookwit, and it is extremely well ſupported. There is a great deal of humour in the ſcene between Lovemore and Penelope, in the ſecond act, and their miſtake gives riſe to ſome comic ſtrokes.

The Conſcious Lovers is compoſed ſomewhat in the French taſte, with a mixture of ſituations which give riſe to contrary ſenſations. I have already obſerved that ſome ſcenes in this play draw even our tears; it requires a very delicate pencil to ſucceed in this ſpecies of comedy. The generality of our comic pieces turn wholly

wholly on wit and humour, and every ſcene is intended to force the mirth of the audience *. The former is certainly the moſt noble ſpecies of the comic theatre, and muſt univerſally be attended with the beſt effects, ſince thoſe very

* The chief thing which hindered the ſucceſs of the Miſanthrope at its firſt appearance, remains to this day with a great many people; it does not make them laugh. People ſay, notwithſtanding, that it is an admirable play, becauſe they could not ſay otherwiſe without doing themſelves diſcredit. By frequently ſaying this, and hearing it ſaid by others, it comes to be their own opinion in time, and even their taſte to a certain degree. They laugh a little at the repreſentation of this piece; but not enough to be able to ſay, with ſincerity, that of all comedies it is that which gives them moſt pleaſure.

I do not believe that Moliere conſulted his ſervant upon this piece; it was not at all to her taſte. If he conſulted her now and then upon others, it was becauſe he had a mind ſometimes to humour his actors; and it were to be wiſhed, indeed, that he had not done it ſo often.

Trublet's Eſſays, p. 254.

moving

moving ſcenes generally diſplay ſuch conſummate virtue or tenderneſs as overpower the ſoul, or elſe a ſudden and moſt exquiſite happineſs, which makes its way immediately to the heart; we ſympathize immediately with the characters, and tears of joy flow from our ſubjected eyes: The reconcilement of Lord and Lady Townley ever has this effect.

The School for Lovers is one of theſe mixed comedies; for ſeveral ſcenes in it are ſo moving that the hearts of the audience are not proof againſt them. In the third act, when Sir John Dorilant tells Cælia of Modely's addreſſing her, after a tender interview, he ſays,

Oh! Cælia! what a heart have I loſt!

Cælia. You cannot, ſhall not loſe it; worthleſs as it is, 'tis yours. and only yours, my father, guardian, lover, huſband.

[*Hangs weeping upon him.*

And in the fourth act, when Sir John brings in the papers which transfer all his power to her, ſhe replies,

My tears and my confuſion have hitherto hindered me from anſwering; not the invidious ſuggeſtion which you have ſo cruelly charged me with. What friend, what lover, have I, to engroſs my attentions? I never had but one, and he has caſt me off for ever. — O, Sir! give me the papers, and let me return them where my ſoul longs to place them.

Both the ſcenes that contain theſe ſpeeches are vaſtly pathetic and moving; and the greateſt admirer of mere laughing comedies muſt allow, that it requires a maſterly hand thus to turn and wind the hearts of the ſpectators; and as the incidents which give riſe to theſe tender ſcenes have nothing tragic in them, they, properly managed, form very bright paſſages in comedy.

The

The School for Lovers, in my humble opinion, is not inferior in merit to the Conſcious Lovers, and in ſome reſpects it is a much better comedy. I honour Mr. Whitehead for not debaſing ſo noble a plot by the introduction of footmen and chambermaids. To me, the part of Tom and Phillis appears a patch of low comedy in the midſt of a fine delicate piece. The School for Lovers is free from any ſuch blemiſhes; and as the author deſigned it for genteel comedy, he did well to reject thoſe characters, ſo capital in many pieces of a middling rank. In reſpect of character, the School for Lovers is certainly excellent. The ſtage ought on all occaſions to be made the ſchool of virtue; and, generally ſpeaking, thoſe pieces are reckoned the beſt on the Engliſh theatre, which either exhibit noble and ſtriking characters, that are worthy

of imitation, or that ridicule the vices or foibles of the times. In Sir John Dorilant we ſee one of the moſt amiable, generous, and diſintereſted men that could have been created; a character worthy of being exhibited on the ſtage of a polite and refined people; and what ſhews the ſkill of the poet, his excellencies are not unnatural; his character is well ſupported and eaſy; and though he may not at firſt be reckoned an original character, I make no doubt but he will, when we conſider that the traits of originality appear ſtrongeſt in a man whoſe paſſions are violent, and of the impetuous kind, ſuch as ſuſpicion, jealouſy, or revenge; but in a calm picture of what may be called ſtill-life — diſintereſted love, generoſity, and greatneſs of ſoul — the characteriſtical ſtrokes muſt neceſſarily be ſofter, and appear more blended with the general

temper

temper of the man *. Cælia is a young and virtuous girl, whoſe breaſt is filled with the utmoſt delicacy of ſentiment, gratitude, and virtuous inclinations, and finely imagined, to produce thoſe tender ſcenes between her and Sir John. Araminta is a natural contraſt to Cœlia; ſhe is very ſprightly, and, without being a coquette, greatly enlivens the piece. The contraſt between Sir John and Modely is no leſs juſt; the latter is a perfect male

* Les grands mouvemens des paſſions ſont les plus aiſés à peindre. Ce qui a des traits marqués, ce qui eſt fort & ſimple, un homme plein de vivacité & de chaleur, quoique d'un eſprit ordinaire, l'exprimera quelquefois fort bien. Mais les nuances, les ſentimens compoſés de pluſieurs autres, ces illuſions fines que le cœur fait a l'eſprit, en un mot tout le jeu des paſſions, voilà ce qui ne peut être bien rendu que par un génie du premier ordre, par un ecrivain qui joint toute la fineſſe de l'eſprit à toute la délicateſſe du ſentiment.

Eſſais ſur divers Sujets de Litterature, &c. tome iv. p. 279.

coquette, with a ſufficient quantity of vanity and aſſurance, which ſets off the other's manly virtues to the greateſt advantage. Belmour is the fine, eaſy, unaffected gentleman, who, without poſſeſſing the gravity of Sir John, is free from the vanity of Modely.

This noble comedy is entirely free from the looſeneſs of Sir George Etheridge, or the brutality of ſuch characters as Sir H. Beagle in the Jealous Wife, equally the diſgrace of the theatre. When Lady Beverly firſt tells Sir John Dorilant of his rival in thoſe words,

Undoubtedly there is a man:

He replies in that generous manner,

Tell me who, that I may — No; that I may give her to him, and make her happy, whatever becomes of me.

How noble is this ſentiment! the lover is on fire to know the man, but ſuddenly checks

checks his ardour; and the greatneſs of his ſoul gets the better of his paſſion, at its very height. And again, in the third act, when he is talking to Araminta about Cælia, he ſays,

Beſides, they are not his, but her inclinations, which give me any concern. It is the heart I require: The lifeleſs form, beauteous as it is, would only elude my graſp; the ſhadow of a joy, not the reality.

And in the fifth act, when he reproaches Modely:

Honour! Mr. Modely! 'Tis a ſacred word: You ought to ſhudder when you pronounce it. Honour has no exiſtence but in the breaſt of truth; 'tis the harmonious reſult of every virtue combined.—You have ſenſe, you have knowledge; but I can aſſure you, Mr. Modely, though parts and knowledge without the dictates of juſtice, or the feelings of humanity, may make a bold and miſchievous member of ſociety even courted by the world, they only in my eye make him more contemptible.

But it would be endleſs to repeat every ſentiment in this noble play, which does honour to our theatre; they, on the whole, form a fine picture of humanity. The poet rather aimed at painting beautiful nature, than diſplaying his own wit. The natural plainneſs of Addiſon appears, not the brilliancy of Congreve.

The Diſcovery, by Mrs. Sheridan, is another comedy in which are contained ſeveral of thoſe moving ſcenes which force the tears of an audience. This comedy has great merit; and though it

* What Monſ. Diderot means by ſaying our comedies are without manners and taſte, I cannot underſtand; but muſt attribute it to that vanity ſo characteriſtic of the French nation. "Nous avons, ſays he, des comédies: les Anglois n'ont que des ſatyres, à la vérité pleines de force & de gaieté, mais ſans mœurs & ſans goût.

Diſcours ſur la Poëſie Dramatique, prefixed to his Le Pere de Famille, p. 83.

bears

bears a great reſemblance to the Conſcious Lovers * (a ſuperior piece) in the diſcovery of Mrs. Knightly being Lord Medway's daughter, and in the character of Colonel Medway; yet it has a fine moral, and no one can be preſent at the repreſentation of it without feeling many of thoſe ſenſations, which the theatre ought always to occaſion: Lady Medway's ſaving Lady Flutter from deſtruction, ſhould be a leſſon to that giddineſs,

* It is of great prejudice to the ſucceſs of many pieces, to reſemble others which have been wrote ſome time before, and are in poſſeſſion of the ſtage. Had the Suſpicious Huſband been a leſs excellent comedy, its ſimilitude, in ſome inſtances, to Every Man in his Humour would have hurt it. The character of Strictland is very like that of Kitely: and the inclination they both have, by ſtarts, to diſcloſe the ſecret of their jealouſy to their ſervants Thomas and Lucetta, Kitely's in the third ſcene of the third act in Every Man in his Humour, and Strictland's in the third ſcene of the ſecond act, is almoſt a copy.

which does not pay a proper regard to thoſe little quarrels in the marriage ſtate which are apt, for a time, to get the better of affection, and, if not prevented, bring on the greateſt evils; and to that imprudence in ſuffering the moſt diſtant addreſſes from ſuch men as Lord Medway. Colonel Medway's is a moſt noble character; and Sir A. Branville's an original one; his ſtiff formality, which is ſo very like the very prudery of an old maid, is well drawn; and though not a conſiderable perſonage in the piece, there is great merit in the painting.

Theſe comedies of the tender kind ſeldom contain many of thoſe very comic ſituations, which heighten the ridiculous ſo extremely in ſome pieces; ſuch intereſting plots have great advantages; but I do not here mean to compare the two ſpecies

ſpecies of comedy: The School for Lovers and the Suſpicious Huſband are ſo diametrically oppoſite in their reſpective plans, as fully to prove that there are more ſpecies of comedy than one. Theſe intereſting ſituations, if they are properly introduced, give a wonderful vivacity to the fable of a piece. The Suſpicious Huſband will alone furniſh us with ſeveral inſtances: Frankly's miſtake in believing Jacintha a man—Clarinda's catching him—Bellamy's ſeeing Frankly with Jacintha — Ranger's coming into Mrs. Strictland's dreſſing-room — the adventure of the hat — Ranger's adventure with Jacintha in diſguiſe — and his carrying her off to his friend Bellamy—add to theſe, Ranger's parting Bellamy and Frankly in the fourth act, and the ſituations which follow; which I cannot help thinking one of the very beſt comic ſcenes

on

on our ſtage, the humour of it is worked up to ſuch a climax, as to produce the fineſt effect imaginable. In that excellent comedy of Mr. Murphy's, the Way to keep Him, there are alſo ſeveral moſt comic ſituations: I hardly know a more ridiculous one than Lovemore's intrigues being all blown up in the fifth act; the ridicule is finely pointed, and carried to a moſt pleaſing height. In the fourth act, when Lady Conſtant comes in to Sir Baſhful and Lovemore, after reading his letter, there follows a ſcene truly comic, in which Sir Baſhful brings Lovemore out of his ſcrape. There are alſo ſeveral others, which give great life and vivacity to the piece.—In All in the Wrong there are many of theſe intereſting comic ſituations, which make the plot of that piece as intereſting as almoſt any one I know. Lady Reſtleſs, ſeeing

ſeeing from her window Sir John take Belinda in his arms when ſhe faints: Sir John's liſtening to Lady Reſtleſs, while ſhe is looking at the picture and talking to herſelf, are very droll ſcenes: But the latter end of the fourth act is full of buſineſs, and contains ſeveral moſt intereſting ſituations. When Sir John has ſhewn in the maſk whom he takes to be Mrs. Marmalet, ſhe ſays,

But in a little time you'll make up all quarrels with your lady, and I ſhall get ruined by this ——

Sir John. No, no, never fear. I ſhall never be reconciled to her—I hate her—deteſt her.

Lady Reſtleſs (unmaſking.) Do you ſo, Sir?—Now Sir John, what can you ſay now, Sir?—

Sir John. My Lady Reſtleſs!—Confuſion! What ſhall I ſay?—

After a little altercation, he tells her,

I ſay, my dear, for I ſtill regard you—and this was all done to — to —cure your jealouſy — all done to cure you of your jealouſy.

After

After this moſt comic ſcene ſucceeds another, equally amuſing. When Beverly is diſcovered to be in the cloſet, and Sir John has of courſe turned the tables upon her, ſhe recollects herſelf, and retaliates his ſpeech:

Why, my dear, this was all done—to—to—to—cure you of your jealouſy—for I knew you would do as you have done, and ſo I—reſolved to do as I have done—was it not well done, my dear? ha! ha*!

* Miſs Haughton has great merit in the part of Lady Reſtleſs; but I once ſaw it performed in a ſuperior manner, at Lynn in Norfolk, by Mrs. Dyer, an actreſs in a ſtrolling company: In my humble opinion, ſhe entered more into the ſpirit of the character, and acted it with greater vivacity. Her huſband performed Sir John Reſtleſs infinitely better than Mr. Yates. There are but few, even on the London theatres, who excel Mr. and Mrs. Dyer: She does Mrs. Oakly with great ſpirit, and is admirable in Belvidera, and Zara in the Mourning Bride. Yates is not to be compared to Mr. Dyer in Major Oakley.

I hardly

I hardly know a more truly comic, or better managed ſcene in any comedy than this; the ſituations are infinitely humourous, and raiſe the mirth of the audience to the higheſt pitch.

The ſcene in the ſecond act of the Jealous Wife, where Mrs. Oakley diſſembles with her huſband, is very entertaining; and that in the third act, where ſhe overhears his converſation with Harriot, is truly comic; the two laſt ſcenes alſo of the fifth act are well contrived and intereſting.

The laſt maxim I ſhall endeavour to inculcate for the compoſition of comedy, is never to introduce a diſguſting brutality on the ſtage, of any kind, for the ſake of originality. I know no comedy in which there is ſo flagrant an inſtance

of

of this conduct as in the Jealous Wife: Sir Harry Beagle is a character wretchedly drawn, and his brutality is too ſhocking for the ſtage. Let the reader conſult the beginning of the ſecond act, between Tom and Sir H. Beagle, which is very low and very dull; I can ſee but little wit in the pedigree. Ruſſet enquiring after his daughter, Sir Harry anſwers him about the mare; then,

Ruſſet. Damn her blood!—Harriot! my dear provoking Harriot! where can ſhe be? Have you got any intelligence of her?

Sir H. No, faith, not I: We ſeem to be quite thrown out here.—But, however, I have ordered Tom to try if he can hear any thing of her among the oſtlers.

Soon after Sir Harry propoſes,

Suppoſe you put an advertiſement into the news-papers, deſcribing her marks, her age, her height, and where ſhe ſtrayed from. I recovered a bay mare once by that method.

Such

Such ſentiments as theſe, one would think, were adapted to pleaſe the mob of Smithfield, but how a polite audience can bear ſuch ſtrings of vulgarneſs, is to me ſurprizing. Sir Harry, in the ſame ſcene, moſt emphatically, in his hunting dialect, cries out,

Soho! Puſs—Yoics!

And again,

Soho! Hark forward! Wind 'em and croſs 'em! Hark forward, Yoics! Yoics!

And in the fourth act, in the ſcene between Sir Harry and Harriot, ſhe tells him ſhe is determined not to marry him.

Sir H. But your father's determined you ſhall, Miſs!—So the odds are on my ſide—I am not quite ſure of my horſe, but I have the rider hollow.

She entreats him to be off. Among the reſt of his poliſhed anſwers, he ſays,

I can't, damme.

And then criticiſes her ſhape;

A fine going thing — ſhe has a deal of foot —— treads well upon her paſterns — goes above her ground ——

Har. Peace, wretch — Do you talk to me, as if I were your horſe?

Sir H. Horſe! Why not ſpeak of my horſe? If your fine ladies had half as many good qualities; they would be much better bargains.

And again,

Mayhap ſo. — But what ſignifies talking to you? — The 'ſquire ſhall know your tricks. — He'll doctor you, —— I'll go and talk to him. He'll break you in. — If you won't go in a ſnaffle, you muſt be put in a curb. — He'll break you, damme.

To crown all this low, vulgar, Smithfield converſation of Sir Harry's, comes his ſwopping his miſtreſs to Lord Trinket for a horſe. — I muſt own I cannot ſee the end of making ſuch a brutal contemptible character ſo conſiderable in the drama;

drama; ſketching ſuch a vile caricature requires little art and no genius; and what entertainment a polite audience can receive from his miſerable dulneſs, I cannot poſſibly apprehend.

The Jealous Wife is but a middling comedy; there is very little character in it; excepting Major Oakley, which is not drawn amiſs, there is none the leaſt ſtriking. Mrs. Oakley's jealouſy is unnatural: Her huſband is a very poor body, Lord Trinket a common fop, and Harriot one of the moſt inſipid Miſſes in comedy; her lover has nothing ſtriking in him; Lady Freelove, in the hands of a maſter, would have made a good comic character. The ſucceſs this piece has met with, is owing much more to the incomparable powers of Mr. Garrick ... Mrs. Pritchard, than to any great ſhare of merit in itſelf.

SECT. II.

Of the SUBLIME *and* PATHETIC.

ALTHOUGH Longinus has wrote a particular treatiſe on this ſubject, yet authors are at this day not determined in what the ſublime conſiſts. Monſ. Boileau, in his preface to his excellent tranſlation of that author, has endeavoured to explain his meaning. Monſ. de la Motte expreſſes it to be *the new and the true united in a grand idea, and expreſſed with elegance and brevity*; and as examples, he cites a paſſage out of Moſes:

God ſaid, Let there be light; and there was light.

And another from Homer, where Ajax cries out,

Great God! give us but day, and then fight againſt us.

Theſe paſſages are both quoted by Longinus,

ginus, but he does not ſay expreſsly that the former is really ſublime. Monſ. Rollin, however, contradicts la Motte's opinion, and will not allow either of them to be ſublime. This variety of opinions will render an attempt to explain the ſublime, chiefly from modern authors, an unentertaining taſk. There are few expreſſions more indefinitely uſed, or more confounded with others, than this. In reading good authors, we are apt to ſay, "That is very ſublime!"—"This is expreſſed in a moſt ſublime manner!" while the paſſages in queſtion are, perhaps, rather *beautiful* than *great*. Theſe miſtakes, which happen very frequently, and which miſlead our taſte, ariſe from not duly reflecting on what the true ſublime is.

Taken in a general ſenſe, it extends not only to the fine arts, but exiſts in the

vaſt, though lifeleſs productions of nature. Whatever exalts the ſoul, or ſtrikes forcibly on the imagination, may be juſtly denominated ſublime; whether it be a poem, a picture, a piece of muſic, or a range of immenſe rocks. The diſpoſition of mind raiſed by the ſublime varies according to the object. In poetry and painting, it is generally pleaſing; but thunder and the Alps are both ſublime, and more connected with awe than pleaſure. This extenſive variety diſplays the impoſſibility of defining the ſublime in a few words; in this ſketch I ſhall confine myſelf to the ſublime of the fine arts *.

The

* Rouſſeau deſcribes great effects attending the ſight of ſublime objects, in the beautiful deſcription in Julie of the Valois. J'admirois l'empire qu'ont ſur nos paſſions les plus vives les êtres les plus inſenſibles, & je mépriſois la philoſophie

The nice line which ſeparates the ſublime from the beautiful, is very difficult to

ſophie de ne pouvoir pas même autant ſur l'ame qu'une ſuite d'objets inanimés.

Tome i. p. 121.

Lord Kaimes obſerves very juſtly, that regularity is required in ſmall figures, and order in ſmall groupes; but that, in advancing gradually from ſmall to great, regularity and order are leſs and leſs required. This remark ſeems to explain the extreme delight we have in viewing the face of nature, when ſufficiently enriched and diverſified by objects. The bulk of the objects ſeen in a natural landſcape are beautiful, and ſome of them grand. A flowing river, a ſpreading oak, a round hill, an extended plain, are delightful; and even a rugged rock, or barren heath, though in themſelves diſagreeable, contribute, by contraſt, to the beauty of the whole. Joining to theſe the verdure of the fields, the mixture of light and ſhade, and the ſublime canopy ſpread over all; it will not appear wonderful that ſo extenſive a group of glorious objects ſhould ſwell the heart to its utmoſt bounds, and raiſe the ſtrongeſt emotions of grandeur. The ſpectator is conſcious of an enthuſiaſm which cannot bear confinement, nor the ſtrictneſs of regularity and

to draw: Out of twenty perſons, not two would be of the ſame opinion. The extreme great and noble paſſages of an author are eaſily diſcovered; but the ſofter ones are more doubtful; they, like the fine tints of a picture, are blended as it were with the general maſs of colours. There are ſeveral ſources of the ſublime; Longinus reckons five, and theſe may be either diminiſhed or increaſed: Now there are ſome ſtrokes of poetry which contain all theſe ſeveral excellencies; and many which poſſeſs only the leaſt of them, and whoſe pretenſions to the ſublime may be too weak to be allowed; it will

order; he loves to range at large, and is ſo enchanted with ſhining objects, as to neglect ſlight beauties and defects. Thus it is that the delightful emotion of grandeur depends little on order and regularity: and when the emotion is in its height, by a ſurvey of the greateſt objects, order and regularity are almoſt totally diſregarded. Elements of Criticiſm, vol. i. p. 298.

therefore

therefore be difficult always to determine how many inferior ſtrokes are tantamount to one of the fineſt *.

I. The firſt and the greateſt ſource of the ſublime, is grandeur of conception,

* The treatiſe of Longinus is rather on the perfection of writing in general, than the ſublime in particular; where he gives us ſomething of a definition, this will appear very evident.

Οταν ὑπ' ανδρος εμφρονος, και εμπειρου λογων, πολλακις ακουομενον τι προς μεγαλοφροσυνην την ψυχην μη ζυνδιατιθη, μηδ' εγκαταλειπη τη διανοια πλειον τι λεγομενου το αναθεωρουμενον, πιπτη δ' αν το ζυνεχες επισκοπης, εις απαυξησιν, ουκ αν ετ' αληθες Υψος ειη, μεχρι μονης της ακοης ζωζομενον. Τυπος γαρ των ουκ μεγα, ου πολλη μεν η αναθεωρησις, δυσκολος δε, μαλλον δ' αδυνατος, η καταξαναστασις, ισχυρα δε η μνημη, και δυσεξαλειπτος. Ολως δε καλα νομιζε Υψη και αληθινα, τα διαπαντος αρεσκοντα, και πασιν. Οταν γαρ τοις απο διαφορων επιτηδευματων, βιων, ζηλων, ηλικιων, λογων, ει τι, και ταυτον αμα περι των αυτων απασι δοκη, τοτ' η εξ ασυμφωνων ως κρισις και ζυγκαταθεσις, την επι τω θαυμαζομενω πιστιν ισχυραν λαμβανει και αναμφιλεκτον.

Long. Περι Υψους, ζ.

or

or the thought. This is the mere effect of invention, and ſpeaks the truly great genius far more than the fineſt compoſition. There are ſome thoughts which diſplay themſelves in a *vaſt idea*, which are ſomewhat different from others, which paint a certain greatneſs of ſoul which is wonderfully captivating.

In the fourth book of the Iliad, Agamemnon reproves Diomed for not being engaged :

No words the godlike Diomed return'd,
But heard reſpectful, and in ſecret burn'd.

He, like a rough old ſoldier, was determined that his actions only ſhould ſpeak for him ; a thought infinitely great in Homer, for Diomed expreſſes more by this moſt judicious ſilence than he could have done in ten thouſand verſes. Longinus has celebrated a ſimilar paſ-

ſage

ſage in the Odyſſey, the ſilence of Ajax, which is undoubtedly noble, and far above expreſſion; and his remark on it is very juſt: "Hence it comes to paſs, ſays he, that a naked thought without words, challenges admiration, and ſtrikes by its grandeur." To arrive at excellency like this, we muſt needs ſuppoſe that which is the cauſe of it; I mean, that an orator of the true genius, muſt have no mean and ungenerous way of thinking. For it is impoſſible for thoſe who have groveling and ſervile ideas, or are engaged in the ſordid purſuits of life, to produce any thing worthy of admiration, and the peruſal of all poſterity. Grand and ſublime expreſſions muſt flow from them, and them alone, whoſe conceptions are ſtored and big with greatneſs *.

An

* Γεγραφα πως και ειρωθι το τοιουτον Υψους μεγαλαφροσυνης απηχημα. Οθεν και φωνης διχα θαυμαζεται πολε ψιλη

An expreſſive ſilence has always a wonderful effect: That of the heralds from Agamemnon to Achilles, in the Iliad, is finely imagined.

Th'unwilling heralds act their lord's commands,
Penſive they walk along the barren ſands;
Arriv'd, the hero in his tent they find,
With gloomy aſpect, on his arm reclin'd.
At awful diſtance long they ſilent ſtand,
Loth to advance, or ſpeak their hard command:
Decent confuſion! * ——

It ſeems as if the greateſt poets had attempted to render this ſtriking beauty

ψιλη καθ' εαυτην η εννοια δι' αυτο το μεγαλοφρον· ως η τε Αιακιδου εν Νεκυια ζιωπη, μεγα και παντος υψηλοτερον λογου, πρωτον εν το, εξ ε γινεται, προϋποτιθεσθαι παντως αναγκαιον, ως εχειν δει τον αληθη ἡητορα μη ταπεινον φρονημα, και αγενες. Ου δε γαρ οιον τε μικρα και δουλοπρεπη φρονηματα και επιτηδευσεις παρ' ολον τον βιον, θαυμαστον τι και τω παντος αιωνος εξενεγκειν αξιον· μεγαλοι δε οι λογοι τετων, καλα το εικος, ων αν εμβριθεις ωσιν αι εννοιαι. Ταυτη και εις τας μαλιστα φρονηματιας εμπιπτει τα υπερφυα, ο γαρ τω Παρμενιωνι φησαντι, εγω μεν αν ηρκεσθην.

Long. Περι Υψους, θ'.

* Book I. ver. 426.

remarkable

remarkable in their works; the ſilence of Dido is alſo extremely ſublime:

Illa ſolo fixos oculos averſa tenebat;
Nec magis incepto vultum ſermone movetur,
Quam ſi dura ſilex aut ſtet Marpeſia cautes.
Tandem corripuit ſeſe, atque inimica refugit
In nemus umbriferum —*

She diſdains to converſe with a man who ſhe thinks has forſook her in a baſe manner, and expreſſes her anger in a much more noble manner than any complaints could have done.—I cannot here avoid mentioning a famous picture of antiquity, wherein ſilence (if I may ſo expreſs myſelf) is moſt ſublimely introduced: It is Agamemnon ſacrificing his daughter Iphigenia. Timantes, the painter, gave Calchas a ſorrowful look; he then painted Ulyſſes more ſorrowful, and afterwards her uncle Menelaus with all the grief and concern in his countenance,

* Æn. VI. ver. 469.

which

which his pencil was able to diſplay. By this gradation he had exhauſted the paſſion, and had no art left for the diſtreſs of her father Agamemnon, which required the ſtrongeſt heightening of all; he therefore covered up his head in his garment, and left the ſpectator to imagine that exceſs of anguiſh which colours were unable to expreſs. This noble thought was copied by Pouſſin in his picture of the death of Germanicus. It is reckoned a maſter-piece in this painter to have rendered Agrippina ſo eaſy to be diſtinguiſhed in that picture: After having treated the different kinds of affliction of the other perſonages, as paſſions capable of being expreſſed, he places on Germanicus's bed-ſide a woman of a noble dreſs and ſtature, hiding her face with her hands, and in an attitude entirely expreſſive of the deepeſt ſorrow.

It

It is eaſy to apprehend that the affliction of this perſonage muſt ſurpaſs that of all the reſt, ſince this able artiſt, deſpairing to repreſent it, got over the difficulty by taking the hint from the Grecian's invention.

Herodotus has put a noble anſwer into the mouths of the Athenians to Alexander the Macedonian, who had been ſent by Mardonius to prevail on them to enter into a league with the Perſians:

Νῦν τε ἀπάγγελλε Μαρδονίῳ, ὡς Ἀθηναῖοι λέγουσι, ἐς ὃν ἂν ὁ ἥλιος τὸν αὐτὸν ὁδὸν ἴῃ τῇ περ καὶ νῦν ἔρχεται, μήκοτε ὁμολογήσειν ἡμέας Ξέρξῃ *.

I do not know any paſſage, even in Demoſthenes, where the high ſpirit of liberty is more ſublimely repreſented †. It ſpeaks a certain greatneſs of mind,

* Page 507, edit. Gronov.

† See Geddes, p. 64.

which,

which, well expreſſed, will always bear the ſtamp of ſublimity. The High-prieſt's anſwer, in the Athalia of Racine, is of this nature: He is told by the officer of the great rage of Athalia againſt him, and that it was expected the haughty princeſs would ſoon attack God in his ſanctuary; the High-prieſt, unmoved, makes this anſwer,

Celui qui met un frein à la fureur des flots,
Sait auſſi des mechans arrêter les complots;
Soumis avec reſpect à ſa volonté ſainte,
Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, & n'ai point d'autre crainte.

Dr. Young, ſpeaking of thoſe happy men, who, in the laſt day, ſtand unmoved amidſt innumerable horrors, remarks,

Others, whoſe long attempted virtue ſtood
Fix'd as a rock, and broke the ruſhing flood,
Whoſe firm reſolve nor beauty could melt down,
Nor raging tyrants from their poſture frown;

Such

Such, in this day of horrors, ſhall be ſeen
To face the thunders with a godlike mien;
The planets drop, their thoughts are fix'd above;
The center ſhakes, their hearts diſdain to move;
An earth diſſolving, and a heav'n thrown wide,
A yawning gulph, and fiends on ev'ry ſide.
Serene they view, impatient of delay,
And bleſs the dawn of everlaſting day.

The true ſublime, which is founded in heroic ſentiment, is to be met with in what we call the untutored mind, as well as the moſt poliſhed. I heard a little anecdote not long ſince, which I am very well aſſured is true, and will not be foreign to the preſent ſubject. It happened ſince the breaking out of the late war.—Captain R— being taken priſoner by the French Indians, at a battle in North America, was carried to their town, to be ſacrificed in the uſual barbarous manner; he was even tied to the ſtake, and on the verge of the moſt cruel tortures,

when an old Indian of authority ſuddenly reprieved him from death, and took him for his ſlave. His ſervitude was tolerable, and his treatment humane: His maſter taught him their language, and the whole circle of Indian ſcience—to build canoes, — to kill beaver — to hunt deer — and laſtly to ſcalp the enemy. A year and a half elapſed in this manner, when an engagement happened between a party of the Engliſh and the Indians. The old man took Captain R— up a little hill, and addreſſed him as follows: "My friend! you ſee the men of your country are going to attack us — you have lived with me a year and a half; you came to me totally ignorant, but I have made a man of you — I have taught you to build canoes — to kill beaver — to hunt — and to ſcalp your enemy: Are you not obliged to me?" Captain R— expreſſ-

ing

ing his gratitude, the Indian aſked him, "Have you a father?"—"I believe he is living," replied Captain R—. "Poor man! I pity him. Know, I was once a father! My ſon fell at my ſide — fell glorioufly! — covered with wounds — but I revenged his death — I ſcalped — and then killed his enemy." Making here a pauſe, he proceeded: "Behold that ſun! With what a brightneſs it ſhines to you! Since that day a cloud has darkened all its radiance in my eyes — See that tree (pointing to a magnolia) which bloſſoms ſo fair for you; to me it has loſt all its beauty. — Go — return to your father. — Let the ſun ſhine with all its brightneſs for him; and the tree appear in all its beauty."

See the true ſublime of ſentiment: When we reflect on the manly ſenſe and

generoſity of this untutored Indian, let us not judge of whole nations from partial accounts; but remember, that every people are equally the work of the omnipotent Deity: If we are more enlightened, it ſhould inſpire us with ſentiments of univerſal benevolence — not with the vain impertinence of pride. When we condemn a whole people as barbarians, let us imitate the exalted ſentiments of the Indian, and diſplay as much humanity for the unknown, as he did greatneſs of ſoul.

In the inſtances which I have here given, the ſublime appears in an heroic greatneſs of ſoul, which is thrown either into the actions or words of the reſpective characters. The reader, from his memory, will add many others; but I know none more expreſſive and remarkable

able than thoſe I have quoted, and in each of them the thought is what gives the great ſublimity.

There are a vaſt number of paſſages to be collected from the poets, in which the grandeur of expreſſion is diſplayed rather in a different manner from thoſe I have already quoted; the relation or deſcription of a vaſt or noble idea. Homer deſcribes Diſcord with the greateſt ſublimity of thought.

Οὐρανῷ ἐςήριξε κάρη, καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ βαίνει*.

Of the ſame nature is Virgil's of Fame, which is copied from that of Homer:

Ingrediturque ſolo, & caput inter nubila condit.

And Shakeſpear's of Slander; which, in my humble opinion, is equal, if not ſuperior to either.

* While ſcarce the ſkies her horrid head can bound,
She ſtalks on earth. Il. iv. ver. 443.

Slander,
Whoſe head is ſharper than the ſword, whoſe tongue
Out-venoms all the worms of Nile, whoſe breath
Rides on the poſting winds, and doth belye
All corners of the world, kings, queens, and ſtates,
Maids, matrons; nay, the ſecrets of the grave
This Slander enters *.

The poet, in this ſublime paſſage, raiſes and almoſt terrifies our ideas with the immenſe extent of his thoughts. This deſcription does not only diſplay a grandeur of conception, but the moſt ſkilful application of figures — the true enthuſiaſm of compoſition — and that magnificence of ſtyle which clothes great ideas in a ſuitable language. — Another of theſe majeſtic thoughts is to be found in the Wiſdom of Solomon, and much like thoſe I have quoted:

The almighty word leaped down — it touched the heaven, but it ſtood upon the earth.

* Cymbeline.

How

How much grandeur is there in Homer's idea of the father of the gods!

Ἦ, καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων.
Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἀνάκτος,
Κράτος ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο, μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὄλυμπον.

Mr. Pope's tranſlation of theſe lines is,

He ſpoke, and awful bends his ſable brows;
Shakes his ambroſial curls, and *gives* the nod,
The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of a god.
High heav'n with trembling the dread ſignal took,
And all Olympus to the center ſhook.

Mr. Webb's obſervation on it is extremely juſt: "What ſhall we ſay (ſays he) when the nobleſt images are ruined for the ſake of a jingle? Had it not been for the rhyme, that third line had never found its way into this deſcription. I need not obſerve to you how it interrupts the ſucceſſion of the ideas and embarraſſes the image. It is owing to the ſame

cauſe, that Jupiter is repreſented ſhaking his curls before he had given the nod; whence that, which in the original was a happy effect, becomes in the tranſlation a trifling action *. — Milton ſhewed the ſame grandeur of imagination in his deſcription of Satan:

On th'other ſide, Satan, alarm'd,
Collecting all his might, dilated ſtood,
Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremov'd;
His ſtature reach'd the ſky, and on his creſt
Sat horror plum'd.

The comparing him to a vaſt mountain is very great; but the two laſt lines are inexpreſſibly ſublime: *On his creſt ſat horror plum'd*, is an image amazingly ſtriking.

Dr. Young's deſcription of the Deity is very noble, a few ſtrokes particularly are great:

* Remarks on the Beauties of Poetry, p. 26.

Who

Who ſtrikes thro' nature with the ſolemn roar
Of dreadful thunder, 'points it where to fall,
And in fierce light'ning wraps the flying ball;
Not he who trembles at the darted fires,
Falls at the ſound, and in the flaſh expires *.

The ſixth book of Milton is almoſt a continued picture of the trueſt ſublime; more ſo than any book even in the Iliad itſelf. The coming forth of the Meſſiah is deſcribed with moſt wonderful pomp of diction, cloathing the vaſteſt grandeur of ideas, "Till, in the laſt place, the Meſſiah comes forth in the fullneſs of majeſty and terror. The pomp of his appearance amidſt the roarings of his thunders, the flaſhes of his lightnings, and the noiſe of his chariot wheels, is deſcribed with the utmoſt flights of human imagination †." Theſe lines of Mr. Addiſon's

* Paraphraſe on Job. Works, vol. i. p. 209.
† Spectator, vol. v. No. 333.

may

may be quoted with great propriety in an eſſay on the ſublime, being very fine themſelves.

The imagery of Milton is almoſt every where ſublime, and bears the ſtamp of the fineſt and moſt luxuriant imagination. In how many paſſages do the naked thoughts ſhine with the brighteſt ſplendor; but who is proof againſt their effect, when they kindle up the nobleſt flame of poetic enthuſiaſm!

Now wav'd their fiery ſwords, and in the air
Made horrid circles; two broad ſuns their ſhields
Blaz'd oppoſite; while expectation ſtood
In horror *.

How

* This, and ſome other quotations, which I have ranged under *grandeur of conception*, ſeem at firſt ſight to belong rather to the *application of figures*; but when the imagery diſplays a vaſt and noble thought, I think it deſerves chiefly to be admired for its capital beauty. But every reader will

How great is it to deſcribe their ſhields as ſuns ſtriking circles in the air; and never was imagery more ſublime than that noble one of Expectation ſtanding in horror. The two greateſt of poets are very ſublime in their deſcriptions of ſhields: Milton has another very noble one:

Such deſtruction to withſtand
He haſted, and oppos'd the rocky orb
Of tenfold adamant, his ample ſhield
A vaſt circumference.

And Homer's, of the ægis of Jove is wonderfully ſublime:

High in the midſt the blue-ey'd Virgin flies;
From rank to rank ſhe darts her eager eyes:
The dreadful ægis, Jove's immortal ſhield,
Blaz'd on her arm, and lighten'd all the field:
Round the vaſt orb, an hundred ſerpents rowl'd,
Form'd the bright fringe, and ſeem'd to burn in [gold *.

will doubtleſs form particular notions on the ſources of the ſublime, which appear in the inſtances I have produced.

* Iliad, book ii. ver. 525.

And

And again in the fifth book,

O'er her broad ſhoulders hangs his horrid ſhield,
Dire, black, tremendous! round the margin roll'd
A fringe of ſerpents, hiſſing, guards the gold:
Here all the terrors of grim war appear,
Here rages force, here tremble flight and fear,
Here ſtorm'd contention, and here fury frown'd,
And the dire orb portentous Gorgon crown'd.

There is ſcarce any deſcription in Homer more ſublime than this: Every circumſtance that could add to the horror of this dreadful ſhield, are ſelected with great judgment.

I hardly know any paſſage more truly ſublime than that noble deſcription of the battle, in the Paradiſe Loſt. In theſe lines are contained more ſpecies than one of the ſublime; but I quote them for the *thought*, as ſublimity of conception is always preferable to either *figures*, *compoſition*, or *expreſſion*.

Now

Now ſtormy fury roſe
And clamour, ſuch as heard in heav'n till now
Was never; arms on armour claſhing, bray'd
Horrible diſcord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots rag'd; dire was the noiſe
Of conflict! overhead the diſmal hiſs
Of fiery darts in flaming vollies flew,
And flying vaulted either hoſt with fire:
So under fiery cope together ruſh'd
Both battles main, with ruinous aſſault
And inextinguiſhable rage: all heav'n
Reſounded; and had earth been then, all earth
Had to her center ſhook.

How greatly ſublime is the variety of ſtriking circumſtances here collected to diſplay the horror of the battle; but what a thought was it, to paint the two armies fighting under a fiery vault of flaming arrows! Taſſo's battle, though very ſublime, is far inferior to it:

L'horror, la crudeltà la tema, il lutto
Van d'intorno ſcorrendo: & in varia imago
Vincitrice

Vincitrice la morte errar per tutto
Vedreſti, & andeggiar di ſangue un lagio *.

Milton's deſcription is even greater than the celebrated one of Homer, of which Longinus ſpeaks:

Ἔδδεισεν δ' ὑπενερθεν ἄναξ ἐνέρων Αϊδωνευς.
Δεῖσας δ' ἐξ θρόνε ἆλτο, κὴ ἴαχε, μή οἱ ὕπειτα
Γαῖαν ἀναῤῥήξειε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσιχθων,
Οἴκια δὲ θνητοισι κὴ ἀθανατοισι φανειη,
Σμερδαλε', εὐρωεντα, τα τε ςυζεκσι θεοί περ.

The paſſage is too long to be quoted entire; but if the reader turns to it, he will find it very ſublime. The Grecian critic's words on it are, "The images which Homer gives of the combat of the gods, have in them ſomething prodigiouſly great and magnificent. We ſee in theſe verſes the earth opened to its very center; hell ready to diſcloſe itſelf; the whole machine of the world upon the

* Gieruſalemme liberata, canto ix.

point

point to be deſtroyed and overturned: To ſhew that in ſuch a conflict heaven and hell, all things mortal and immortal, the whole creation in ſhort, was engaged in this battle, and all the extent of nature in danger." Pope has tranſlated it tamely; its ſublimity is almoſt loſt in the couplet.

Heav'n in loud thunders bids the trumpet ſound,
And wide beneath them groans the rending ground;
Deep in the diſmal regions of the dead,
Th'infernal monarch rear'd his horrid head,
Leap'd from his throne, leſt Neptune's arm ſhould lay
His dark dominions open to the day,
And pour in light on Pluto's dread abodes,
Abhorr'd by men, and dreadful ev'n to gods.

The thought of millions of flaming ſwords lighting all hell with their blaze, is amazingly great:

He ſpake: and to confirm his words out flew
Millions of flaming ſwords, drawn from the thighs

Of mighty cherubim; the ſudden blaze
Far round illumin'd hell: highly they rag'd
Againſt the higheſt, and fierce with graſped arms
Claſh'd on their ſounding ſhields the din of war,
Hurling defiance tow'rd the vault of heav'n.

There is a certain majeſty of compoſition in theſe lines that is very ſtriking; the verſification is wrought up to a fine climax of pompous numbers.

Dr. Young deſcribes the deſtruction of the world with all the horrible circumſtances that could be collected. It is as ſublime as any piece of fine poetry can be, when clogged with the barbarous ſhackle of rhyme.

The fatal period, the great hour is come,
And nature ſhrinks at her approaching doom;
Loud peals of thunder give the ſign, and all
Heav'n's terrors in array ſurround the ball;
Sharp light'nings with the meteor's blaze conſpire,
And, darted downward, ſet the world on fire;

Black

Black riſing clouds the thicken'd ether choke,
And ſpiry flames dart thro' the rolling ſmoke,
With keen vibrations cut the ſullen night,
And ſtrike the darken'd ſky with dreadful light;
From heav'n's four regions, with immortal force,
Angels drive on the wind's impetuous courſe
T'enrage the flame: it ſpreads, it ſoars on high,
Swells in the ſtorm, and billows thro' the ſky.
Here winding pyramids of fire aſcend,
Cities and deſarts in one ruin blend;
Here blazing volumes wafted, overwhelm
The ſpacious face of a far diſtant realm;
There, undermin'd, down ruſh eternal hills,
The neighb'ring vales the vaſt deſtruction fills.

Grandeur of conception is not confined to poetry, though its greateſt excellency. I have already quoted Herodotus; and the following inſtance from Mr. Addiſon diſplays a very fine imagination:

By *greatneſs*, I do not only mean the bulk of any ſingle object, but the largeneſs of a whole view, conſidered as one entire piece. Such are the proſpects of an open champaign country, a vaſt uncultivated deſert, of huge heaps of

mountains, high rocks and precipices, or a wide expanſe of water; where we are not ſtruck with the novelty or beauty of the ſight, but with that rude kind of magnificence which appears in many of theſe ſtupendous works of nature. Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to graſp at any thing that is too big for its capacity. We are flung into a pleaſing aſtoniſhment at ſuch unbounded views, and feel a delightful ſtillneſs and amazement in the ſoul at the apprehenſions of them †.

Here we have elevation of thought to a great degree, magnificence of words, and an harmonious, lively, and animated turn of expreſſion; or, according to M. de la Motte's definition of the ſublime, it is the new and the true united in a grand idea, and expreſſed with elegance and brevity. This paſſage will bear the moſt critical examination, and will, I believe, be found truly ſublime.

† Spectator, vol. vi. No. 412.

One more example I muſt be permitted to quote from the ſame eſſay: It is found in the 420th paper:

But when we ſurvey the whole earth at once, and the ſeveral planets that lie within its neighbourhood, we are filled with a pleaſing aſtoniſhment, to ſee ſo many worlds hanging one above another, and ſliding round their axles in ſuch an amazing pomp and ſolemnity! If, after this, we contemplate thoſe wild fields of ether, that reach in height as far as from Saturn to the fixed ſtars, and run abroad almoſt to an infinitude, our imagination finds its capacity filled with ſo immenſe a proſpect, and puts itſelf upon the ſtretch to comprehend it. But if we yet riſe higher, and conſider the fixed ſtars as ſo many vaſt oceans of flame, that are each of them attended with a different ſet of planets, and ſtill diſcover new firmaments and new lights, that are ſunk further in thoſe unfathomable depths of ether, ſo as not to be ſeen by the ſtrongeſt of our teleſcopes, we are loſt in ſuch a labyrinth of ſuns and worlds, and confounded with the immenſity and magnificence of nature.

Theſe are truly ſublime ideas; and, let me add, the ſtyle is finely adapted to ſo ſolemn and noble a ſubject; the flow of the words is majeſtic and harmonious.

The following extract from Shakeſpear is of a different nature, but diſplays a vaſt extent of imagination:

Aye! but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obſtruction, and to rot;
This ſenſible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted ſpirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reſide
In thrilling regions of thick ribbed ice;
To be impriſon'd in the viewleſs winds,
And blown with reſtleſs violence round about
The pendent world †.

There

† Meaſure for Meaſure, Works, vol. i. p. 336. We are ſeldom able to faſten an imitation, with certainty, on ſuch a writer as Shakeſpear. Sometimes we are, but never to ſo much advantage as when he happens to forget himſelf in this reſpect, the repreſentation of certain tenets,

different

There is ſomething extremely awful and ſublime in this paſſage, notwithſtanding the falſe notions it contains; what infinite expreſſion is there in *thrilling regions of thick ribbed ice!*

A ſtrong imagination is ſcarcely bounded in its flights by the univerſe itſelf: The following paſſage, from Dr. Akenſide, deſcribes the field of fancy with the

different from thoſe which prevail in a writer's country or time. Thus in the above ſpeech of Claudio's, it is plain that the ſentiments are not thoſe which any man entertained of death in the writer's age, or in that of the ſpeaker. We ſee in this paſſage a mixture of chriſtian and pagan ideas; all of them very ſuſceptible of poetical ornament, and conducive to the argument of the ſcene; but ſuch as Shakeſpear had never dreamt of, but for Virgil's Platonic hell, where we read,

Aliæ panduntur inanes
Suſpenſæ ad ventos; aliis ſub gurgite vaſto
Infectum eluitur ſcelus, aut exuritur igni.

Letter to Mr. Maſon.

ſame force of invention as Shakeſpear did the regions of the damned.

Tir'd of earth,
And this diurnal ſcene, ſhe ſprings aloft
Thro' fields of air, purſues the flying ſtorm,
Rides on the volley'd lightning thro' the heav'ns,
Or, yok'd with whirlwinds and the northern blaſt,
Sweeps the long tract of day. Then high ſhe ſoars
The blue profound, and hov'ring o'er the ſun,
Beholds him pouring the redundant ſtream
Of light; beholds his unrelenting ſway
Bend the reluctant planets to abſolve
The fated rounds of time. Thence far effus'd,
She darts her ſwiftneſs up the long career
Of devious comets; thro' its burning ſigns
Exulting circles the perennial wheel
Of nature, *and looks back on all the ſtars*,
Whoſe blended light, as with a milky zone,
Inveſts the orient †.

In a paſſage in Dr. Young's Laſt Day is another vaſt idea, which is truly ſublime:

Again the trumpet's intermitted ſound
Rolls the wide circuit of creation round,

† Pleaſures of Imagination.

An

An univerſal concourſe to prepare
Of all that ever breath'd the vital air;
In ſome wide field, which active whirlwinds ſweep,
Drive cities, foreſts, mountains to the deep,
To ſmooth and lengthen out th'unbounded ſpace,
And ſpread an area for all human race.

The thought of whirlwinds driving the whole earth from its foundations, to ſpread that immenſe area, is greatly conceived.

After theſe inſtances which I have quoted from ſeveral ancient and modern authors, the reader, I apprehend, will not be diſpleaſed with a few from the ſacred writings; writings not read ſo much as they deſerve, if only on account of their beauties, conſidered merely as pieces of compoſition. With what majeſty does David every where deſcribe the Deity, perhaps equally ſublime.

Then the earth ſhook and trembled, the foundations alſo of the hills moved, and were ſhaken,

becauſe he waswroth. There went up a ſmoak out of his noſtrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens alſo, and came down, and darkneſs was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly, and came flying upon the wings of the wind ‡.

What can be more ſublime than the magnificent images that are here brought together; the immenſity of the idea of the Almighty is here expreſſed in a more noble manner than when Homer deſcribed his Jupiter. There is another paſſage in the Pſalms extremely ſublime:

The waters ſaw thee, O God, the waters ſaw thee, and were afraid; the depths alſo were troubled. The clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was heard round about; the lightnings ſhone upon the ground; the earth was moved, and ſhook withal. Thy way is in the ſea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footſteps are not known *.

‡ Pſ. xviii. 7—10. * Pſ. lxxvii. 16—19.

The

The repetition of the words *the waters ſaw thee*, throws an air of grandeur over the whole paſſage: what a combination of images is here collected together; the air thundered, thine arrows went abroad, the lightning ſhining, the ſea, and the great waters. In another place, the preſence of God is deſcribed in very magnificent terms:

O God, when thou wenteſt forth before thy people, when thou didſt march through the wilderneſs. Selah. The earth ſhook, the heavens alſo dropped at the preſence of God: even Sinai itſelf was moved at the preſence of God, the God of Iſrael ‡.

Theſe paſſages all breathe the true ſpirit of the ſublime: But the CIVth Pſalm (the fineſt in the collection) is wonderfully pompous and expreſſive. The exordium of it,

Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul!

‡ Pſalm lxviii. 7, 8.

is a very noble opening; but he goes on in a glorious ſpirit of poetry:

O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art cloathed with majeſty and honour. Thou deckeſt thyſelf with light as it were with a garment; and ſpreadeſt out the heavens like a curtain.

The magnificence of theſe vaſt ideas will not appear fully to a moderate imagination. David paints the Almighty in all his glory; and clothes him, with what? With flames of fire, and the moſt dazzling effulgent brightneſs. The heavens themſelves form his pavilions: To *ſpread forth the heavens!* never was expreſſion more ſublime!

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, and maketh the clouds his chariot; and walketh upon the wings of the wind. He maketh his angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flaming fire.

With what grandeur of conception, and pomp of expreſſion, is the preſence of the

the Deity deſcribed! His chambers are laid on the immenſe waters; the clouds ſerve him for a chariot; he mounts upon the wings of the wind, which fly in obedience to its Lord: What ſublime painting is this! Tempeſts and flames of fire are his miniſters!

He laid the foundations of the earth; that it ſhould not move from time to time. Thou coveredſt it with the deep as with a garment: The waters ſtand in the hills. At thy rebuke they flee; at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid.

It would be endleſs to point out every beauty in this noble compoſition. *Covering the earth with the deep as with a garment*; *the waters flying at the voice of* the Almighty's *thunder*: theſe are noble thoughts, expreſſed with the greateſt energy. But the whole Pſalm is one continued piece of the ſublime; and the concluſion full of the fineſt enthuſiaſm.

II. The

II. The ſublime is very frequently the reſult (as Longinus has obſerved) of a ſkillful Application of Figures. It would be endleſs to ſpecify every ſpecies of them; but in many paſſages of the works of great authors, the ſublime appears principally in them, not as a ſecondary, but the chief excellence.

In ſome of the quotations already made, in the article of Grandeur of Conception, the application of figures is very ſtriking; but it ſuited the diviſion of the ſubject better, to introduce them rather on account of the *thoughts*, as a ſuperior excellency. Yet many other paſſages may be found, in which the figures conſtitute the ſublime. It is almoſt impoſſible always to rank each quotation preciſely under its proper head; but the exactneſs neceſſary to diſplay the ſeveral ſources of the ſublime is eaſily attained.

Milton's

Milton's deſcription of Satan is a noble inſtance of the ſublimity of figures:

He above the reſt,
In ſhape and geſture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tow'r: his form had not yet loſt
All her original brightneſs, nor appear'd
Leſs than archangel ruin'd, and th'exceſs
Of glory obſcur'd; as when the ſun, new riſen,
Looks thro' the horizontal miſty air
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipſe, diſaſtrous twilight ſheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs.

Theſe metaphors convey the ſtrongeſt idea imaginable, and elevate the deſcription wonderfully. The imagery in that celebrated paſſage of Euripides is amazingly ſtriking:

Ὦ μῆτερ, ἱκετεύω σε μὴ φοβοῦ μοι.
Τὰς αἱματωπὰς, καὶ δρακοντώδεις κόρας·
Αὗται γὰρ, αὗται πλησίον θρώσκουσί μου.

Καὶ,

Καὶ,
Οἴμοι, κτανεῖ με· ποῖ φύγω*;

The poet here, ſays Longinus, actually ſaw the Furies with the eyes of his imagination, and has compelled his audience to ſee what he beheld himſelf. Dryden, in his Muſic Ode, has wrought up an image of fury equal to this of Eupides. The paſſage is ſo extremely beautiful, that it needs no apology for increaſing the number of quotations, which

* Iph. Taur. ver. 408.

Pity thy offspring, mother, nor provoke
Thoſe vengeful furies to torment thy ſon.
What horrid ſights! how glare their bloody eyes!
How twiſting ſnakes curl round their venom'd heads!
In deadly wrath the hiſſing monſters riſe,
Forward they ſpring, dart out, and leap around.
Eurip. Oreſt. ver. 255.

And again,

Alas! — ſhe'll kill me! — whither ſhall I fly.
Ib. Iph. Taur. ver. 408.

are

are ſo neceſſary in a work of this nature.

Revenge! Revenge! Timotheus cries,
See the Furies ariſe!
See the ſnakes that they rear,
How they hiſs in their hair,
And the ſparkles that flaſh from their eyes!
Behold a ghaſtly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
They are Grecian ghoſts, that in battle were ſlain,
And unbury'd remain,
Inglorious on the plain.
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew:
Behold how they toſs their torches on high,
How they point to the Perſian abodes,
And glitt'ring temples of their hoſtile gods!
The princes applaud with a furious joy,
And the king ſeiz'd a flambeau with zeal to deſtroy.
Thaïs led the way,
To light him to his prey;
And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

No deſcription was ever more pictureſque, animated, or ſublime; the imagery ſtrong

ſtrong and expreſſive, and places before our eyes the very action, painted in ſo wonderful a manner, that the imagination of Dryden muſt have been elevated to a great degree when it produced this noble ſtanza. Nothing in Euripides excels it. Such ſtriking images, when expreſſed with ſuch energy, muſt ever contain the true ſublime. In Pope's Eloiſa and Abelard we have another very fine inſtance:

But o'er the twilight groves and duſky caves,
Long ſounding iles, and intermingled graves,
Black Melancholy ſits, and round her throws
A death-like ſilence and a dead repoſe;
Her gloomy preſence ſaddens all the ſcene,
Shades ev'ry flow'r, and darkens ev'ry green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.

Mr. Warton celebrates theſe lines greatly: "The figurative expreſſions (ſays he) *throws*, and *breathes*, and *browner horror*,

horror, are, I verily believe, the ſtrongeſt and boldeſt in the Engliſh language." This panegyric is too exaggerated: the expreſſions are certainly ſtriking, but in the inſtances of the ſublime which the reader will find even in this ſection, more expreſſive ones, I apprehend, are to be diſcovered. The image of the goddeſs Melancholy ſitting over the convent, and, as it were, expanding her dreadful wings over its whole circuit, and diffuſing its gloom all around it, is truly ſublime and ſtrongly conceived. The following is a very fine inſtance of the ſame nature:

'Tis Fancy, in her fiery car,
Tranſports me to the thickeſt war,
There whirls me o'er the hills of ſlain,
Where Tumult and Deſtruction reign;
Where, mad with pain, the wounded ſteed
Tramples the dying, and the dead;
Where giant Terror ſtalks around,
With ſullen joy ſurveys the ground,

And, pointing to th'enſanguin'd field,
Shakes his dreadful Gorgon ſhield *.

The image of Terror, in the laſt lines is ſtrongly conceived, and has a ſtriking effect. That of Oblivion, in the following paſſage, is alſo ſublime:

a nodding dome
O'ergrown with moſs, is now all Virgil's tomb:
'Twas ſuch a ſcene as gave a kind relief
To memory, in ſweetly penſive grief:
Gloomy, unpleaſing images it wrought;
No muſing, ſoft complacency of thought:
For time had canker'd all, and worn away
Ev'n the laſt mournful graces of decay:
Oblivion, hateful goddeſs, ſat before,
And cover'd with her duſky wings the door †.

Theſe lines are full of beauties; their movement is ſlow and ſolemn, and *the laſt mournful graces of decay*, a fine expreſſion.

* Warton's Ode to Fancy. See Dodſley, vol. iii. p. 112.

† Virgil's Tomb. Dodſley, vol. iv. p. 111.

I hardly

I hardly any where know a finer apoſtrophe than the following, in Mr. Pope's Moral Eſſays:

Bluſh, grandeur, bluſh! proud courts withdraw your blaze!
Ye little ſtars, hide your diminiſh'd rays.

Theſe two lines are extremely ſublime and beautiful: it is well known they are an abrupt addreſs to greatneſs, after mentioning the celebrated Man of Roſs. The thought is equal to the magnificence of the words, which are truly great and pleaſing: What a noble effect has the metaphor in the laſt line; it throws a luſtre over the whole paſſage *.

* Taſſo has a fine thought on the ſuperiority of virtue to greatneſs.

I gradi primi
Pui meritar, che conſequir defio:
Ne pur che me la mia virtu ſublimi,
Di ſcettri altezza invidiar degg'io,

Of a different nature, but far more ſublime, is Shakeſpear's deſcription of a tempeſt; what ſtriking images he places before us; with what fertility of invention has he collected a variety of circumſtances and expreſſive figures, to make us *feel* this dreadful ſtorm!

Kent. Where's the king?
Gent. Contending with the fretful elements:
Bids the wind blow the earth into the ſea,
Or ſwell the curled waters 'bove the main,
That things might change or ceaſe: tears his white hair
(Which the impetuous blaſts, with eyeleſs rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of.)
Strives, in his little world of man, t'out-ſcorn
The to and fro conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry *.

Theſe lines are very fine and picturesque, but greatly heightened by what

* King Lear, act III. ſcene I.

follows

follows ſoon after, where Lear enters, and ſays,

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks; rage, blow!
You cataracts; and hurricanoes, ſpout
Till you've drench'd our ſteeples, drown'd the cocks!
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunder-bolts,
Singe my white head. And thou, all-ſhaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o'th' world,
Crack nature's mould, all germins ſpill at once
That make ingrateful man.

What a ſtriking and bold deſcription is here raiſed by a combination of expreſſive images? One cannot read theſe lines without fancying we are in the midſt of the ſtorm. The abrupt addreſs, *and thou all-ſhaking thunder!* is peculiarly great, and ſublime. Still the tempeſt increaſes with the deſcription:

Kent. Alas, Sir, are you here? things that love night,
Love not ſuch nights as theſe: the wrathful ſkies
Gallow the very wand'rers of the dark,

And make them keep their caves; Since I was man,
Such ſheets of fire, ſuch burſts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard. Man's nature cannot
carry
Th'affliction, nor the force.

It will not be amiſs to tranſcribe here that noble deſcription of a tempeſt in the Iliad:

Ἐν δ' ἐπετ' ὡς ὅτε κῦμα θοὴ ἐν νηῒ πέσῃσι
Λάβρον ὑπαὶ νεφέων ἀνεμοτρεφὲς, ἥ δέ τε πᾶσα
Ἄχνη ὑπεκρύφθη, ἀνέμοιο δὲ δεινὸς ἀϋτμὴ
Ἰσίῳ ἐμβρέμεται, τρομέουσι δέ τε φρένα ναῦται
Δειδίοτες, τυτθὸν γὰρ ὑπ' ἐκ θανάτοιο φερόνται.

The poet, in theſe lines, paints the ſailors in a moſt deſperate ſituation, while they are only not ſwallowed up in every wave, and have death before their eyes as faſt as they eſcape it. Nay more, the danger is diſcerned in the very hurry and confuſion of the words; the verſes are toſſed up and down with the ſhip; the harſh-

neſs

neſs and jarring of the ſyllables gives us a lively image of the ſtorm; and the whole deſcription is in itſelf a terrible and furious tempeſt *.

The tranſlation is very fine:

He burſts upon them all:
Burſts as a wave that from a cloud impends,
And, ſwell'd with tempeſts, on the ſhip deſcends;
White are the decks with foam; the winds aloud
Howl o'er the maſts, and ſing thro' ev'ry ſhrowd:
Pale, trembling, tir'd, the ſailors freeze with fears,
And inſtant death on ev'ry wave appears.

But the word *deſcends* has nothing of the ſpirit of the original.—The applica-

* Ωδε Ποιητης ουκ εις απαξ παροριζει το δεινον, αλλα τους αει, και μονονουχι καθ' εκαστον κυμα πολλακις απολλυμενους εικονογραφει· και μην τας προθεσεις, ασυνθετους ουσας, συναναγκασας παρα φυσιν, και εις αλληλας συμβιασαμενον, υπ' εκ θαναλοιο, τω μεν συνεμπιπτοντι παθει το επος ομοιως εβασανισεν, τη δε του επους συνθλιψει το παθος ακριβως απεπλασατο, και μονονουχ ενελυπωσε τη λεξει του κινδυνου το ιδιωμα, υπ' εκ θαναλοιο φερομενας.

Long. Περι-Υψους, ι'.

tion of ſtriking figures renders the following deſcription of a battle very ſublime. Several circumſtances which ſpeak ſtrongly the horror of a battle are ſelected and figuratively expreſſed in a very bold manner.

" Chief mixed his ſtroke with chief, and man with man; ſteel clanging, ſounded on ſteel; helmets are cleft on high. Blood burſts and ſmoaks around.—Strings murmur on the poliſhed yews. Darts ruſh along the ſky. Spears fall like the circles of light that gild the ſtormy face of night*.

There

* Fingal, book ii. p. 12.—It is amazing, that it ſhould ever be a moment doubted whether Fingal was genuine or not. Had Mr. M'Pherſon publiſhed it for his own, thoſe very critics who now endeavour to prove it a modern production, would then have been among the firſt to detect ſo manifeſt a plagiariſm. Not one image, not a ſingle metaphor in the whole poem, but what are drawn from natural objects which abound in the ſcene of the piece; no marks of an enlightened age, but every where the plaineſt and moſt ſimple ideas are expreſſed in the moſt natural

There is ſomething very awful and ſublime in the following compariſon:

They ſtretch their ſhields like the darkened moon, the daughter of the ſtarry ſkies, when ſhe moves a dun circle through heaven.

And in another place:

Let me awake the king of Moren, he that ſmiles in danger, for he is like the ſun of heaven that riſes in a ſtorm.

The ſublime is very apparent in all theſe paſſages, and reſults from the ſkilful manner in which ſome of the boldeſt figures in the world are introduced.

III. The ſublime reſults very often from a lively and animated Painting of the Paſſions, which always ſpeaks the hand of a great genius.

manner, to men who lived in thoſe early ages, in the infancy of the arts and ſciences. The inventor of ſuch a poem at preſent, would be an abſolute prodigy.

There

There are many inſtances of the fineſt and moſt exquiſitely natural repreſentation of the paſſions, which diſplay a vaſt extent of fancy and rapidity of conception, but which ſome would conſider rather as natural than ſublime. The ſublime they ſuppoſe to depend, in ſome meaſure, on a certain dignity and grandeur, either of conception or compoſition, without which it cannot exiſt; and this opinion certainly agrees with the moſt received notions at preſent; Longinus however (and it requires great confidence to doubt his authority) has quoted the following ode of Sappho, as a perfect inſtance of the ſublime.

Φαινεταί μοι κηνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
Ἔμμεν' ὠνὴρ ὄστις ἐναντίος τοι
Ἰζάνει, καὶ πλασίον ἀδὺ φωνε-
σας ὑπακούει,
Καὶ γελαΐς ἱμερόεν· τό μοι τὰν
Καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόασεν,
Ὡς γὰς εἴδω σε, βροχέως με φωνᾶς
Οὐδεν ετ' εἴκει·

Ἀλλὰ καμμὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγ'· λεπτὸν δὲ
Αὐτίκα χρῶ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμακεν
Ὀμμάτεσσιν δ' οὐδὲν ὄρημ' ἐπιῤῥόμ-
βευσι δ' ἀκουε.
Κὰδ δ' ἰδρὼς ψυχρὸς κέκαλται, τρόμος δὲ
Παῖσαν ἀγρεῖ· χλωροτέρα δὲ ποιὰς
Ἐμμὶ· τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύσην
Φαίνομαι ἄπνυς.
Ἀλλὰ πᾶν τολμάτον, ἐπεὶ πένητα*.

"As there are no ſubjects, ſays Longinus, which are not attended by ſome

* Bleſt as th'immortal gods is he,
The youth who fondly ſits by thee,
And hears and ſees thee all the while
Softly ſpeak and ſweetly ſmile.
'Twas this depriv'd my ſoul of reſt,
And rais'd ſuch tumults in my breaſt;
For while I gaz'd, in tranſport toſt,
My breath was gone, my voice was loſt.
My boſom glow'd, the ſubtle flame
Ran quick thro' all my vital frame;
O'er my dim eyes a darkneſs hung,
My ears with hollow murmurs rung.
In dewy damps my limbs were chill'd,
My blood with gentle horror thrill'd,
My feeble pulſe forgot to play,
I fainted, ſunk, and dy'd away.

adherent

adherent circumſtances, an accurate and judicious choice of the moſt ſuitable of theſe circumſtances, and an ingenious and ſkilful connection of them into one body, muſt neceſſarily produce the ſublime. For what by the judicious choice, and what by the ſkilful connection, they cannot but very much affect the imagination. Sappho is an inſtance of this; who, having obſerved the anxieties and tortures inſeparable to jealous love, has collected and diſplayed them all with the moſt lively exactneſs. But in what particular has ſhe ſhewn her excellence? In ſelecting thoſe circumſtances which beſt ſuit with her ſubject, and afterwards connecting them together with ſo much art. If the collecting ſuch circumſtances in the manner Sappho has done, ſpeaking of love, be the true ſublime; an accurate deſcription of the effects of any other paſſion (of the

the graver kind) muſt alſo have the ſame excellency. Shakeſpear has a moſt admirable paſſage, which paints to the life the horror, fear, remorſe, and anguiſh of a guilty conſcience: Macbeth, before he commits the horrid deed, is terrified with imaginary appearances:

Is this a dagger which I ſee before me,
The handle tow'rd my hand? Come, let me clutch
thee;
I have thee not, and yet I ſee thee ſtill:
Art thou not, fatal viſion, ſenſible
To feeling, as to ſight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a falſe creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppreſſed brain?
I ſee thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.——
Thou marſhal'ſt me the way that I was going,
And ſuch an inſtrument I was to uſe.
Mine eyes are made the fools of th'other ſenſes;
Or elſe worth all the reſt— I ſee thee ſtill,
And on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not ſo before.—There's no ſuch thing—
It is the bloody bus'neſs which informs
Thus to mine eyes——

This

This is wonderfully natural. When He has committed the murder, he enters again :

Who's there ? — What ho !
Lady. Alack ! I am afraid they have awak'd,
And 'tis not done ; th'attempt, and not the deed,
Confounds us—hark !—I laid their daggers ready,
He could not miſs 'em. — Had he not reſembled
My father as he ſlept, I had don't—My huſband!
Macb. I've done the deed — didſt thou not hear a voice ?
Lady. I heard the owl ſcream, and the crickets cry.
Did not you ſpeak ?
Macb. When ?
Lady. Now.
Macb. As I deſcended ?
Lady. Ay.
Macb. Hark !—who lies i'th' ſecond chamber ?
Lady. Donalbain.
Macb. This is a ſorry ſight ! [*looks on his hands.*

The whole ſcene is equally fine and natural : it certainly contains that variety of adherent circumſtances which Longinus mentions ; in the whole range of poetry,

poetry, a more natural and exquiſite painting of the paſſions is not to be met with: every circumſtance ſuitable to the occaſion is ſelected, and applied with the utmoſt art. If Sappho's ode is ſublime, this paſſage of Shakeſpear's is truly ſo. In Romeo and Juliet there is another, in which the moſt violent paſſions of the ſoul are expreſſed in a ſingle line; Balthaſar tells Romeo of Juliet's death, he cries out,

Is it even ſo? then I defy you, ſtars!

There are many celebrated pictures that diſplay a vaſt imagination in the delineation of paſſion, particularly that ſpecies of which I am at preſent ſpeaking, the connection of various circumſtances. I hardly know a piece which diſplays the ſublime in painting better than the tranſfiguration of our Saviour by Raphael.

That excellence in painting which may be called the ſublime, is a certain perfection reſulting from ſeveral cauſes; it may ſometimes be found in a ſingle head; in ſome pictures it will ariſe from the thought; in others, from the expreſſion: An animated and glowing expreſſion of a ſubject not trivial, will in painting be truly ſublime. In a few pieces we find a great number of excellencies united, which, like the poetry of Milton, bears the ſtamp of the moſt ſublime genius.

The transfiguration of our Saviour by Raphael, is of this laſt rank; a piece ſecond to none in the world, but rather the very ſupreme boaſt of painting itſelf. The ſubject, diveſted of epiſodes, would have admitted but very few figures; Raphael, however, by his admirable management,

nagement, has introduced ſeven and twenty, all ſo well placed, that, except three or four, one ſees them all entirely; contrary to the common cuſtom of painters, who, either to avoid work, or that they know not how to diſengage a multitude of figures one from another in the ſame picture, preſent us with a great many heads behind ſome perſons who are painted at their full length in the front; but here every thing is free and diſengaged, and the figures ſo judiciouſly ranged, that one ſees them all alike, without any confuſion, or one hiding or covering another*. An afflicted mother, accompanied with a parent and ſome Jews, come to preſent to Jeſus Chriſt, her ſon who was poſſeſſed, that he might deliver him from the wicked ſpirit: A ſtrong robuſt man holds this infant, who is hor-

* See Roma Illuſtrata, by Samber, p. 126.

ribly agitated by the convulſions of the poſſeſſion, with ſtiffened arms and eyes ſtarting out of his head, and the fingers bent backward, tormented with the pains he ſuffers: One thinks one hears his cries, and is ſenſible of his agonies; all his veins are ſwoln, the ſkin of his body ſtretched after an extraordinary manner, his muſcles tumid, and all the parts of his body in ſuch a violent condition, that no other torment but that of poſſeſſion could viſibly throw a human body into the like contorſions. This mother finds the apoſtles without Jeſus Chriſt, at the foot of mount Thabor; ſhe ſhews them the tortures her ſon ſuffers; all the apoſtles look with an attention full of aſtoniſhment at the convulſions of this child; but not believing it in their power to free him from the devil that poſſeſſes him, one of them contents himſelf to ſhew the

mother

mother the way which their divine maſter had taken, who was retired to the top of that mountain, at the foot of which they attended him.

The mother ſhews the apoſtles her ſuffering ſon; the apoſtles, in their turn, to the mother the ſummit of the mountain, where their maſter is. The action of the mother carries our eyes to the apoſtles, and that of the apoſtles elevates them to Jeſus Chriſt; and theſe two actions have ſuch union one with another, that the deſign of the picture is diſcovered at once, and the hiſtory alſo compriſed in one view. The management of the ſubject is admirable, but the ſeveral figures all diſplay the moſt poetic pencil. The heads of the apoſtles, and of the Jews that came along with the mother, which have all airs ſo different,

appear to be more and more animated, the longer one looks at them; we believe ourſelves really preſent at the very action, and that we ſee a real mountain in ſize and colour; that we are actually at its foot with the mother of the poſſeſſed child; we look up as ſhe does towards the ſummit of mount Thabor, where the Son of God appears with ſo ſhining a whiteneſs as enlightens the whole picture, and by the ſplendor of which we ſee Jeſus Chriſt full of a majeſty peculiar to a divinity; a ſplendor ſo brilliant and ſo lively, that the top of the mountain, which is all illuminated, makes the bottom appear to lie in a kind of darkneſs and obſcurity.

Chriſt hangs in the air ſelf-ſuſpended, in the triumphant attitude of a God; Moſes and Elias, who are on each ſide,

ſhine

ſhine alſo with a very great ſplendor, but which yet appears as a reflection from that of their Lord; and though their ſuſpenſion in the air has an attitude which diſplays victory and triumph, Raphael knew ſo well to join with it ſuch modeſty, that they always appear two creatures penetrated with the veneration of their Creator and God, whom they adore with ſentiments of the moſt profound humility, even in their triumphant ſuſpenſion. The three apoſtles, who went up with Jeſus Chriſt to the top of mount Thabor, ſeeing him environed with ſo great a ſplendor, and cloathed with ſo much majeſty, remain equally dazzled and aſtoniſhed; and though the attitude of all three are very different, it would be a very difficult matter to ſay which expreſſes moſt the amazement and ſurprize ſuch a ſpectacle produces.

Never was there a better figure than the woman, who brings her ſon; it is one of thoſe bodies ſo divinely well deſigned, by which one ever knows the great Raphael. One of theſe bodies, the colours of which are ſo graceful and delicate, has the elegance of a natural beauty which enchants, on which ſide ſoever he repreſents it to us: this which is turned, makes us ſee a ſhape the moſt free and eaſy, and the moſt noble that could be figured. The art of the painter is admirable in the expreſſion, by which he has ſhewn in a manner ſo ſenſible the elevation of Jeſus Chriſt, in reſpect to thoſe three apoſtles on the mountain; for though there is only one foot diſtance between him and them, he ſeems to touch the empyreum, and that the ſummit of the mountain where they are, in relation to him, ſeems a profound abyſs, where he

he leaves them infinitely lower than himſelf; the firm and elevated attitude of Chriſt, and the proſtration of his apoſtles, one of whom has his body extended almoſt at its full length upon the ground, produce this effect; and this is what no painter ever yet knew how to imitate in any of the copies that I have ſeen made of this piece.

In a word, this admirable picture is full of the moſt ſtriking beauties; the figure of our Saviour alone, his attitude, and the vaſt expreſſion in his countenance, are truly ſublime; the group at the bottom of the mountain diſplays the greateſt variety of perfect deſign; the airs of the heads, the expreſſion of their ſeveral emotions at ſeeing the poſſeſſed ſon, the whole compoſition and poetry of the piece, are wonderfully ſublime.

The Laſt Judgment of Michael Angelo is one of the ſublimeſt pictures in the world; never was a picture painted in a more ſevere or terrible guſto. It is the moſt ſtupendous painting in Europe, and diſplays the moſt immenſe variety of figures and poſtures imaginable, the nobleſt deſigns, the airs of the heads beautiful and full of fire. The light of this piece is wonderful; after the deſtruction of the earth, the ſun, and the ſtars, &c. it would have been wrong to repreſent a light like that of our day: Michael Angelo has invented a mixture of half clear and half obſcure, of white and blue, which has ſuch an effect as can ſcarcely be conceived. In ſhort, this piece, which is one of the firſt in the world, is a fine inſtance of the terrible ſublime in painting.

The

The diſplay of various paſſions in a group of figures is ſeen very ſtrongly in that cartoon at Hampton Court, where Jeſus Chriſt confirms to St. Peter the power of the keys, in the preſence of the apoſtles: It is one of thoſe tapeſtry pieces on the Acts of the Apoſtles, which pope Leo X. ordered to be made for the chapel of Sixtus IV. St. Peter, holding the keys in his hands, is on his knees before Jeſus Chriſt, and ſeems penetrated with an emotion conformable to his ſituation; his gratitude and zeal for his maſter are viſibly painted on his countenance. St. John the Evangeliſt is drawn in the form and attitude of a young man, as he was at that time: he ſeems to commend, with a motion of frankneſs quite natural to his age, the worthy choice which his maſter had made; a choice which it viſibly appears he would have made

made himſelf; ſo beautifully is the vivacity of his approbation marked by the air of his countenance and the eager movement of his body. The apoſtle next to him ſeems more advanced in years, and ſhews the phyſiognomy and countenance of a ſedate man; wherefore, agreeably to his character, he approves of the choice by a plain motion of the arms, and a nod of the head. At the furthermoſt end of the group one may diſtinguiſh a ſanguine and choleric man; he has a very freſh countenance, a reddiſh beard, a large forehead, a flat noſe, and all the features of a ſupercilious perſon: He looks therefore with an air of diſdain, and with a contracted brow, on a preference which it is eaſy to perceive he thinks unjuſt. Men of his temperament are very ready to fancy themſelves not inferior to their neighbours. Next to him

him is placed another apoſtle, confuſed in his countenance; whoſe melancholy complexion is eaſily diſcerned by a pale meagre face, a black broad beard, by the habit of his body, and in ſhort by all the ſtrokes which naturaliſts aſſign generally to this complexion: he ſtoops, and fixing his eyes on Jeſus Chriſt, ſeems to be devoured with a black jealouſy, for a choice which he is not going to object againſt, although he is likely to retain a ſpirit of reſentment for it a long time: in fine, it is as eaſy to diſtinguiſh Judas in this figure, as if one were to ſee him hanged to a fig-tree with a purſe about his neck *. There is nothing which oftener captivates

* Réflexions Critiques, par du Bos, tome i. § 13. He gives another inſtance, which I ſhall quote in his own words: Speaking of Raphael, he ſays — Je doute même qu'il ſoit poſſible de pouſſer l'invention poëtique plus loin que ce grand peintre l'a

captivates in painting, at firſt ſight, than a brilliant thought thrown into an allegory;

l'a fait dans les tableaux de ſon bon tems. Une autre piece de la même tenture répréſente St. Paul annonçant aux Atheniens ce Dieu auquel ils avoient dreſſé un autel ſans le connoître; & Raphaël a fait de l'auditoire de cet apôtre un chef-d'œuvre de poëſie, en ſe tenant dans les bornes de la vraiſemblance la plus exacte. Un Cynique appuyé ſur ſon bâton, & qu'on reconnoît pour tel à l'effronterie & aux haillons qui faiſoient la caractere de la ſecte de Diogene, regarde St. Paul avec impudence. Un autre philoſophe qu'on juge à ſon air de tête un homme ferme & même obſtiné, a le menton ſur ſa poitrine; il eſt abſorbé dans des réflexions ſnr les merveilles qu'il entend, & l'on croit s'appercevoir qu'il paſſe dans ce moment-là de l'ébranlement à la perſuaſion. Un autre a la tête panchée ſur l'epaule droite, & il regarde l'apôtre avec une admiration pure, qui ne paroît pas encore accompagnée d'aucun autre ſentiment. Un autre porte le ſecond doigt de ſa main droite ſur ſon nez, & fait le geſte d'un homme qui vient d'étre enfin éclairé ſur des verités dont il avoit depuis long tems une lumiere confuſe. Le peintre oppoſe à ces philoſophes des jeunes gens & des femmes qui marquent leur étonnement

allegory; yet few contain the true ſublime. There is a very fine thought which the abbé du Bos ſpeaks of, and which deſerves here to be quoted: "I cannot recollect, ſays he, more than one compoſition merely allegorical, that can be cited as a model, and which even Pouſſin and Raphael (if I may be allowed to judge of their ſentiments by their works) would have been willing to have adopted. It is impoſſible to imagine any thing more complete in its kind than this idea, ſo elegant in its ſimplicity, and ſo ſublime

nement & leur émotion par des geſtes convenables à leur âge comme à leur ſexe. Le chagrin eſt peint ſur le viſage d'un homme vêtu comme le pouvoient être alors chez les Juifs les gens de la loi. Le ſuccès de la prédication de St. Paul devoit produire un pareil effet ſur un Juif obſtiné. La crainte d'être ennuyeux m'empêche de parler d'avantage des perſonnages de ce tableau, mais il n'en eſt aucun qui ne rende compte très-intelligiblement de ſes ſentimens au ſpectateur attentif.

Tome i. § 13.

by its agreement with the place for which it was deſigned. This famous compoſition was the invention of the late prince of Condé *, a prince of as bright a conception, and as lively an imagination, as any perſon in his time.

" The prince here mentioned cauſed the hiſtory of his father, commonly known in Europe by the name of the Great Condé, to be painted in the gallery of Chantilly. There was one difficulty which lay in his way in the execution of his project: The hero in his youth had been engaged in the intereſt of the enemies of our government, and had performed part of his great exploits when he bore arms againſt his country; it might be therefore naturally expected, that there ſhould be no parade made of thoſe atchievements

* Henry Julius.

in

in the gallery of Chantilly. On the other hand, ſome of thoſe very actions, as his ſuccouring the town of Cambray, and his retreat from before Arras, were ſuch illuſtrious feats of war, that it muſt have been a great mortification to a ſon ſo fond of his father's glory, to ſuppreſs them in a kind of temple which he was going to erect to the memory of this hero. The ancients would have ſaid, that piety itſelf had inſpired him with the method of perpetuating the memory of thoſe great actions, whilſt he made a ſhew of concealing them. He ordered therefore Clio, the hiſtorical Muſe, an allegorical but well-known perſonage, to be drawn with a book in her hand, on the back of which there was the following title, *The Life of Prince Condé:* with the other hand ſhe was tearing ſome leaves out of the book, which, as faſt as ſhe

tore, ſhe flung upon the ground; on the ſcattered leaves one might read, *The Relief of Cambray*, *The Succour of Valenciennes*, *The Retreat from before Arras*, in ſhort, the title of almoſt all the great actions of the prince of Condé during his ſtay in the Spaniſh Netherlands; actions in which every thing was commendable but the cauſe in which he performed them. Unfortunately this piece was not executed purſuant to ſo ingenious and ſo ſimple an idea: The prince, who had conceived ſo noble a deſign, ſhewed on this occaſion an exceſs of complaiſance for the art, by giving the painter leave to alter the elegance and ſimplicity of his thought, by figures which add only to the compoſition of the piece, without making it ſay any more than what had been expreſſed already in ſo ſublime a manner *.

* This is of a different caſt from another piece drawn for the Dominicans. "Chriſt advances from

IV. There is a certain weight and dignity of compoſition which often includes the ſublime; but as a trivial thought, although dreſſed up in the moſt pompous manner, can never be truly great, this ſpecies of the ſublime muſt ariſe from the united effect of the thought and language, when the firſt is not ſo eminently ſtriking as to deſerve being ranked under the article of grandeur of conception.

from betwixt the other two perſons of the Trinity, as if he were going to execute the ſentence of damnation, which he had juſt before pronounced againſt the world, figured by a globe placed at the bottom of the picture: He holds a thunderbolt in his hand, in the attitude of a fabulous Jove, and ſeems juſt ready to dart it againſt the world. The Virgin Mary, and ſeveral ſaints placed near to Chriſt, intercede for the world, without ſeeming to prevail on him to ſuſpend his fury. But to come to the deſign of the picture, and to its agreement with the place where it was to be expoſed, St. Dominic covers the world with his mantle and roſary.

The following inſtance from Mr. Pope will beſt explain my meaning.

Come then, my friend! my genius, come along;
Oh maſter of the poet, and the ſong!
And while the muſe now ſtoops, or now aſcends,
To man's low paſſions, or their glorious ends,
Teach me like thee, in various nature wiſe,
To fall with dignity, with temper riſe;
Form'd by thy converſe, happily to ſteer
From grave to gay, from lively to ſevere *;
Correct with ſpirit, eloquent with eaſe,
Intent to reaſon, or polite to pleaſe.
Oh! while along the ſtream of time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
Say, ſhall my little bark attendant ſail,
Purſue the triumph, and partake the gale †?

When

* D'une voix legere
Paſſer du grave au doux, du plaiſant au ſevere!
Boileau.

† Imitated from Statius:
Sic ubi magna novum Phario de littore puppis
Solvit iter, jamque innumeros utrinque rudentes,
Lataque veliferi porrexit brachia mali
Invaſitque vias, in eodem anguſta phaſelus,
Æquore, & immenſi partem ſibi vendicat auſtri.

And

When ſtateſmen, heroes, kings, in duſt repoſe,
Whoſe ſons ſhall bluſh their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verſe to future age pretend
Thou wert my guide, philoſopher, and friend?
That, urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
From ſounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
For wit's falſe mirror, held up nature's light,
Shew'd erring pride, Whatever is, is right;
That Reaſon, Paſſion, anſwer one great aim;
That true Self-love and Social are the ſame;
That Virtue only makes our bliſs below;
And all our knowledge is, Ourſelves to know *.

Theſe lines are extremely beautiful; but I cannot ſee in them all the five ſources of the ſublime mentioned by Longinus, as Dr. Warburton aſſerts. Shakeſpear ſpeaks of the vanity of human grandeur with infinite dignity of ſtyle:

And again:

Immenſæ veluti *connexa* carinæ
Cymba minor, cum ſævit hyems, pro parte, furentes
Parva receptat aquas, *& eodem volvitur auſtro.*

* Eſſay on Man, book i.

The cloud-capt tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,
The ſolemn temples, the great globe itſelf,
Yea all which it inherit, ſhall diſſolve,
And, like this inſubſtantial pageant faded,
Leave not a wreck behind.

The noble addreſs of Satan to the Sun, in the Paradiſe Loſt, is conceived with ſuch propriety, and expreſſed in ſuch an admirable manner, diſplaying almoſt the melancholy turn of his mind in the ſolemn movement of the lines:

O thou, that, with ſurpaſſing glory crown'd,
Look'ſt from thy ſole dominion like the god
Of this new world, at whoſe ſight all the ſtars
Hide their diminiſh'd heads; to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O ſun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what ſtate
I fell, how glorious once above thy ſphere,
Till pride and worſe ambition threw me down,
Warring in heav'n againſt heav'n's matchleſs king*.

The poetic ſtyle in the following deſcription of Hector engaging, is wonder-

* Book iv. ver. 32.

ſully

fully pompous and animated: Mr. Pope's tranſlation is ſo noble, that I may venture to quote it for the compoſition:

Mars, ſtern deſtroyer! and Bellona dread,
Flame in the front, and thunder at their head;
This ſwells the tumult and the rage of fight;
That ſhakes a ſpear, that caſts a dreadful light;
Where Hector march'd, the god of battles ſhin'd,
Now ſtorm'd before him, and now rag'd behind *.

There is great dignity of compoſition and a vaſt fire of imagination diſplayed in Monſ. Rouſſeau's deſcription of the riſing ſun; the paſſage is truly ſublime.

* Iliad, book v. ver. 726. Hector, in the twelfth book, burſts open the gate at the Grecian wall, and is painted in moſt noble colours by Homer, entering the entrenchment:

Now ruſhing in, the furious chief appears
Gloomy as night, and ſhakes two ſhining ſpears,
A dreadful gleam from his bright armour came,
And from his eye-balls flaſh'd the living flame;
He moves a god, reſiſtleſs in his courſe,
And ſeems a match for more than human force.

On le voit s'annoncer de loin par les traits de feu qu'il lance au-devant de lui. L'incendie augmente, l'orient paroît tout en flâmes: à leur éclat on attend l'aſtre long-tems avant qu'il ſe montre: à chaque inſtant on croit le voir paroitre, on le voit enfin. Un point brillant part comme un éclair & remplit auſſi-tôt tout l'eſpace: le voile des ténébres s'efface & tombe: L'homme reconnoît ſon ſejour, & le trouve embelli. La verdure a pris durant la nuit une vigueur nouvelle; le jour naiſſant qui l'eclaire, les premiers rayons qui la dorent, la montrent couverte d'un brillant rézeau de roſée, qui réfléchit à l'œil la lumiere & les couleurs. Les oiſeaux en chœur ſe réuniſſent & ſaluent de concert le pere de la vie; en ce moment pas un ſeul ne ſe tait. Leur gazouillement foible encore, eſt plus lent & plus doux que dans le reſte de la journée, il ſe ſent de la langueur d'un paiſible réveil. Le concours de tous ces objets porte aux ſens une impreſſion de fraîcheur qui ſemble penetrer juſqu'à l'ame. Il y a là une demi-heure d'enchantement auquel nul homme ne réſiſte: un ſpectacle ſi grande, ſi beau, ſi delicieux n'en laiſſe aucun de ſang-froid.

This deſcription is wonderfully ſtriking; and I cannot avoid adding a few of his ſucceeding remarks.

S'il

S'il n'a long-tems parcouru des plaines arides; ſi des ſables ardens n'ont brûlé ſes pieds, ſi la réverberation ſuffoquante des rochers frappés du ſoleil ne l'oppreſſa jamais, comment goûtera-t-il l'air frais d'une belle matinée? Comment la parfum des fleurs, le charme de la verdure, l'humide vapeur de la roſée, le marcher mol & doux ſur la pelouſe, enchanteront-ils ſes ſens? Comment le chant des oiſeaux lui cauſera-t-il une émotion voluptueuſe, ſi les accens de l'amour & du plaiſir lui ſont encore inconnus? Avec quels tranſports verra-t-il naître une ſi belle journée, ſi ſon imagination ne ſait pas lui peindre ceux dont on peut la remplir? Enfin comment s'attendrira-t-il ſur la beauté du ſpectacle de la nature, s'il ignore quelle main prit ſoin de l'orner?

Ne tenez point à l'enfant des diſcours qu'il ne peut entendre. Point de deſcriptions, point d'éloquence, point de figures, point de poëſie. Il n'eſt pas maintenant queſtion de ſentiment ni de goût. Continuez d'être clair, ſimple & froid; le tems ne viendra que trop tôt de prendre un autre langage *.

The

* Emile, tome ii. p. 9. The paſſage is ſo well tranſlated, that the quotation of the Engliſh cannot be tedious.

The thoughts in this noble deſcription are full of fire; the painting is bold, glowing,

"There you will ſee the fiery rays it ſcatters among the clouds, as harbingers of its approach. The illumination increaſes, the eaſt ſeems all in flames, and you expect the glorious orb before it diſcovers itſelf. Above the horizon you think you ſee it every moment; it at length appears. Its rays dart like lightning o'er the face of nature, and darkneſs vaniſhes at the ſight. Man glories in his habitation, and ſees it embelliſhed with new beauty. The lawn is refreſhed by the coolneſs of the night, and the light of the moon diſplays its encreaſing verdure; the dew-beſpangled flowers that enamel its ſurface glitter in the ſun-beams, and, like rubies and emeralds, dart their colours on the eye. The chearful birds unite in choirs, and hail in concert the parent of life: not one is ſilent, at this enchanting moment none are mute, though in feeble notes, more ſlow and ſoft than thoſe they chaunt all day, as if from peaceful ſlumbers ſcarce awake, they join in languid harmony. The aſſemblage of ſo many pleaſing objects imprints a glowing ſenſation that ſeems to penetrate the ſoul. Who can withſtand the rapture of this ſhort interval of enchantment? it is impoſſible ſo grand, ſo beautiful, ſo delightful

glowing, and animated; it places the divine object full before our eyes; the

ful a ſcene can be ever beheld with indifference.

" If he has not travelled over deſarts; if his feet have never been parched by burning ſands; if he never hath felt the ſcorching ſun-beams reflected from the ſurrounding rocks, how can he taſte the freſh air of a fine morning? How ſhould he be enraptured with the fragrance of the flowers, the refreſhing verdure of the graſs, the dew-drops ſparkling in the ſun, or the ſoft carpet of the downy moſs? How ſhould the warbling of birds inſpire him with glowing raptures, who is a ſtranger to the ſoft accents of love and delight? How can he behold with tranſport the dawn of ſo lovely a day, whoſe imagination cannot paint to itſelf the joys it is capable of beſtowing? In a word, what tender ſenſations can be excited by the charms of nature in him, who is ignorant by whoſe hand ſhe is ſo beautifully adorned? Talk not to children in a language they do not comprehend; make uſe of no pompous deſcriptions, no flowers of ſpeech, no tropes and figures, no poetry. Taſte and ſentiment are at preſent quite out of the queſtion: ſimplicity, gravity, and preciſion are all that are yet required: the time will come, but too ſoon, when we muſt aſſume a different ſtyle.

force

force of the expreſſions warms the imagination, and the turn and management of the periods diſplay all the charms of harmonious compoſition.

In the poem of the Laſt Day, the author, ſumming up the immenſe numbers who are to be judged, mentions

Thoſe overwhelming armies, whoſe command
Said to one empire, *Fall*; another, *Stand*;
Whoſe rear lay wrap'd in night, while breaking dawn
Rous'd the broad front, and call'd the battle on.

Theſe lines are compoſed with a moſt ſtriking pomp and dignity of ſound, and the thought in the two laſt lines is very noble.

V. The ſublime is ſometimes to be found in the Expreſſion: When a few words, or perhaps a ſingle bold and animated

mated one, conveys a ſtrong idea, it ſtrikes us with ſuch force of eloquence that we may often juſtly conſider it as ſublime.

Milton, ſpeaking of Adam and Eve's careſſing each other, makes uſe of, I verily believe, the ſtrongeſt and boldeſt expreſſion in the Engliſh language:

IMPARADIS'D in one another's arms *.

This ſingle word is truly ſublime. Shakeſpear, throughout his works, perpetually uſes the nobleſt and moſt ſtriking expreſſions: Thus, when he ſpeaks of the calamities to which humanity is ſubject, he calls them

The SLINGS and ARROWS of outrageous fortune †:

SECT.

* Paradiſe Loſt, book iv. ver. 506.

† Hamlet's Soliloquy.—The *ſublime* ſhould always be diſtinguiſhed from the *beautiful* in poetry.

The

SECT. III.

LONGINUS, in his admirable treatiſe, which is rather on Perfection of Writing in general, than the Sublime in particular, ranks the pathetic as one ſource of the ſublime. There needs no apology for throwing the few inſtances I ſhall quote, into a ſection by themſelves, as I always conceived the ſublime and pathetic to be eſſentially different.

That pathetic which affects on the firſt reading, and moves us in the moſt tender manner,

The following expreſſions I ſhould rank with the latter; they are amazingly fine:

Me of my lawful pleaſures ſhe reſtrain'd,
And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with
A *pudency ſo roſie*, the ſweet view on't
Might well have warm'd old Satan; that I thought her
As chaſte as *unſunn'd ſnow*.

manner, generally reſults from the natural painting of diſtreſs: It is attended with a great effect, when the mind of an unhappy man is laid open, and all the workings of misfortune exhibited in their natural colours. Thus Lear's reflections are wonderfully pathetic, and touch our inmoſt ſoul; we feel for the poor old man, whoſe mind is on the verge of madneſs:

But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The leſſer is ſcarce felt. Thou'dſt ſhun a bear;
But if thy flight lay tow'rd the roaring ſea,
Thou'dſt meet the bear i'th' mouth. When the mind's free,
The body's delicate; the tempeſt in my mind
Doth from my ſenſes take all feeling elſe,
Save what beats there: Filial ingratitude!
Is it not, as this mouth ſhould tear this hand
For lifting food to't?—But I'll puniſh home;
No, I will weep no more—In ſuch a night
To ſhut me out?—Pour on, I will endure!
In ſuch a night as this? O Regan! Goneril!—
Your old, kind father, whoſe frank heart gave all:
O, that

O, that way madneſs lies; let me ſhun that;
No more of that.

This paſſage is wrought up to the higheſt pitch of the pathetic of any I ever read; Lear's broken reflection, his ſudden tranſitions of thought, eſpecially in the laſt lines, raiſe our pity in the moſt moving manner, and make their way immediately to the heart: but to hear Garrick repeat theſe lines, ſee them ſet off with all the expreſſive beauty of the juſteſt action, is delightful; no ſcene in human nature was ever more pathetically diſplayed than this, when acted by that wonderful man. When Lear is toſſed from one daughter to another in a ſtorm of agony, Regan ſays to him,

If you'll come to me,
(For now I ſpy a danger) I intreat you
To bring but five and twenty; to no more
Will I give place or notice.

To

To which the old king makes that amazingly pathetic anſwer,

I gave you all!

When he finds what unnatural hags they both are, he falls into thoſe pathetic ſtarts and reflections, that move us with the utmoſt pity.

You ſee me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
If it be you that ſtir theſe daughters hearts
Againſt their father, fool me not ſo much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger;
O let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks. No, you unnat'ral hags,
I will have ſuch revenges on you both,
That all the world ſhall—I will do ſuch things,
What they are, yet I know not; but they ſhall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep:
No, I'll not weep. I have full cauſe of weeping:
This heart ſhall break into a thouſand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep. O fool! I ſhall go mad.

Never were the paſſions painted in a more pathetic manner: The paſſages I have

quoted are ſo full of thoſe ſudden ſtarts of paſſion, thoſe ſtrokes which point out the diſtreſsful ſtate of old Lear's unhappy ſituation, with ſuch ſtriking force of thought and language, that they make their way immediately to the ſoul.

The pathetic is frequently found in a ſudden reflection, which undeceives a man, and inſtead of affording ſome happineſs, or at leaſt eaſe, plunges him into ſudden miſery: Such is Romeo's forgetting his being poiſoned; he flies into raptures at Juliet's being alive, but the ſudden thought gives wings to the poiſon, which flies to the vital part. And in Othello, when he has murdered Deſdemona, Æmilia calls from within:

Yes, 'tis Æmilia — by and by — ſhe's dead.
'Tis like ſhe comes to ſpeak of Caſſio's death;
The noiſe was high—Ha! no more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall ſhe come in? were't good?

I think

I think ſhe ſtirs again — No — What's the beſt?
If ſhe comes in, ſhe'll ſure ſpeak to my wife:
My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
Oh inſupportable! oh heavy hour!

Every ſtart of the ſoul is here diſtinctly featured, and his ſudden reflection of his having no wife, pathetic to the higheſt degree.

In Elfrida, after Athelwold is baniſhed, he demands admittance of Edwin to the preſence of Elfrida, to which Edwin replies,

I hold
'Tis duty to my king, and love to you,
Thus to oppoſe your entrance.

Athelwold then makes this pathetic tranſition,

What, thou traitor!
Thy pardon, Edwin, I forgot myſelf;
Forgot that I ſtood here a baniſh'd man,
And that this gate was ſhut againſt its maſter:
And yet this gate leads to my dear Elfrida,
Can it be barr'd to me?

When the heart ſtruggles with thoſe paſſions which are rooted in it, the miſerable ſtate of the mind gives riſe to a multitude of touching reflections; but when we are forced to abandon whatever is moſt dear to us, and we have in a great meaſure ourſelves been the occaſion of ſo unhappy a ſituation, the pathetic then riſes into the moſt exceſſive diſtreſs. We are obliged to make the ſacrifice; but a million of tormenting reflections make us regret our paſt reſolution. Thus Julie, in her laſt letter to her lover, diſcovers the melancholy ſituation of her mind in the pathetic concluſion.

Ici finiſſent les ſermons de la prêcheuſe. Elle aura deſormais aſſés à faire à ſe précher elle-même. Adieu, mon aimable ami, adieu pour toujours; ainſi l'ordonne l'infléxible devoir: Mais croyez que le cœur de Julie ne ſait point oublier ce qui lui fut cher — mon dieu! que fais-je? — vous le verrez trop à l'état de ce papier. Ah! n'eſt-il

pas

pas permis de s'attendrir en disant à son ami le dernier adieu * ?

St. Preux pours out his whole soul in the conclusion of his last letter to Julie; never was any thing more pathetic than the finishing of these two letters.

Il faut finir cette lettre. Je ne pourrois, je le sens, m'empêcher d'y reprendre un ton que vous ne devez plus entendre. Julie, il faut vous quiter! Si jeune encore il faut déja renoncer au bonheur? O tems, qui ne dois plus revenir! tems passé pour toujours, source de regrets éternels! plaisirs, transports, douces extaces, momens délicieux, raviſſemens céleſtes! mes amours, mes uniques amours, honneur & charme de ma vie! adieu pour jamais.

I scarce any where know more pathetic strokes than these: When the heart melts into farewells for ever, and the whole soul is dissolved into tenderness, it is im-

* La Nouvelle Heloïse, tome ii. p. 196. Amst. edit.

poſſible to be proof againſt the effects of ſuch lively painting.

The relation of a few melancholy thoughts and circumſtances, though not conſiderable, frequently forms the true pathetic. Xenophon's deſcription of an army in an hopeleſs ſituation, is of this nature.

Ταυτα εννȣμενοι, και αθυμως εχοντες, ολιγοι μεν αυτων εις την εσπεραν σιτȣ εγευσαντο, ολιγοι δε πυραν εκαυσαν, επι δε τα οπλα πολλοι ȣκ ηλθον ταυτη τη νυκτι, ανεπαυετο δε οπȣ ετυγχανεν εκαστος, ȣ́ δυναμενοι καθευδειν υπο λυπης, και ποθȣ πατριδων, γονεων, γυναικων, παιδων, &c.

This is very pathetic; in what a beautiful manner the hopeleſs condition of the army is painted, when become deſtitute of leaders, in the heart of the enemy's country, at a diſtance from all friends, and impaſſable mountains and rivers betwixt them and Greece.

In

In the eleventh Iliad, Agamemnon having ſlain Iphidamas, Homer adds a few moſt pathetic reflections:

Oh worthy better fate! Oh early ſlain,
Thy country's friend; and virtuous, tho' in vain!
No more the youth ſhall join his conſort's ſide,
At once a virgin, and at once a bride!
No more with preſents her embraces meet,
Or lay the ſpoils of conqueſt at her feet,
On whom his paſſion, laviſh of his ſtore,
Beſtow'd ſo much, and vainly promis'd more;
Unwept, uncover'd on the plain he lay,
While the proud victor bore his arms away.

There cannot be a more beautiful inſtance of the true pathetic than Andromache's reflections on the fate of Aſtyanax, when ſhe finds Hector is ſlain, beginning at the 620th line of the twenty-ſecond book. And another extreme fine one is Priam's celebrated ſpeech to Achilles, begging the body of Hector, which whole paſſage is amazingly beautiful.

In the Nouvelle Heloïſe, St. Preux, after mentioning the circumſtances which are advantageous to Julie, makes this tranſition to himſelf:

Mais moi, Julie, helas! errant, ſans famille, & preſque ſans patrie, je n'ai que vous ſur la terre, & l'amour ſeul me tient lieu de tout *.

A ſingle reflection in the Odyſſey is alſo pathetic.

Αλλ'εμπης παντας οδυρομενος και αχευων,
Πολλακις εν μεγαροισι καθημενος ημεθεοισιν,
Αλλοτε μεν τε γοω φρενα τερπομαι, αλλοτε δ'αυτε
Παυομαι. αιψηρος δε κορος κρυεροιο γοοιο †.

There is ſtriking and pathetic beauty in theſe four lines; Menelaus's obſerva-

* It is extremely well tranſlated: "But I, alas! Eloiſa, a wanderer without a family, and almoſt without a country, have no one but you upon earth, and am poſſeſſed of nothing, *ſave* my love." Vol. i. p. 63. The word *ſave* here, heightens the pathetic of the paſſage greatly.

† Book iv.

tion,

tion, that, melancholy as his reflections are, they give him pleaſure even in the indulging the tribute due to the glorious dead, of a grateful tear.

Sometimes the very flow of compoſition forms the pathetic; when the thought is moderate, a melancholy ſolemnity in the lines is moving. Of this we have an inſtance in Pope:

Years following years, ſteal ſomething ev'ry day,
At laſt they ſteal us from ourſelves away;
In one our frolicks, one amuſements end,
In one a miſtreſs drops, in one a friend:
This ſubtle thief of life, this paltry Time,
What will it leave me, if it ſnatch my rhyme?
If ev'ry wheel of that unweary'd mill,
That turn'd ten thouſand verſes, now ſtand ſtill.

The pathetic may be continued in a piece to much greater length than the ſublime, which requires a certain aſcending ſeries of greatneſs, a climax in the

thought and compoſition, which the utmoſt extent of imagination cannot ſupport long: The ſixth book of the Paradiſe Loſt continues it longer than any poem extant. But the pathetic may run in a full tide through whole volumes. Of all the books I ever read, Julie is the moſt pathetic. The whole ſtory of her unſucceſsful and unhappy paſſion is compoſed of ſo many moving circumſtances, that I could never think of it without emotion. It is an almoſt continued thread of the true pathetic; but there are ſome letters more affecting than others, and which make their way more immediately to the ſoul. The hundred and ſeventh, in which Mrs. Oab relates to Julie her lover's interview with her, while ill of the ſmall-pox, is amazingly affecting; there are ſo many little delicate circumſtances mentioned in it, which all

unite

unite to render it truly moving, that I think no breaſt, that is not adamant, can be proof againſt ſuch a melancholy tale. The hundred and ſixth, which Julie writes her lover, after requeſting, by her father's orders, that he would releaſe her from her promiſe, is alſo finely compoſed: We ſee her ſoul a prey to her violent love, to terror, and almoſt deſpair; ſhe has not the power to finiſh a ſingle, ſingle ſentence; it is full of ſuch exclamations as a perſon in her unhappy ſituation muſt make; vaſtly natural, and no leſs affecting. In the ſeventy-ſixth, we ſee a different ſpecies of the pathetic, but equally admirable, after the more paſſionate ones; it diſplays a certain calm pathetic, a dignity of diſtreſs, that muſt touch a feeling heart moſt nearly.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

"A Noble metaphor (ſays Addiſon), when it is placed to an advantage, caſts a kind of glory round it, and darts a luſtre through a whole ſentence." Nobody, I believe, will diſpute the juſtneſs of this remark: Indeed metaphors and metaphorical expreſſions wonderfully enliven and ſet off any compoſition, either in poetry or proſe, and greatly aſſiſt an author in explaining his ideas in the moſt ſtriking manner. Quintilian ſays, that the metaphor is an image and a painting, on which we repreſent foreign things with colours. As the languages are more or leſs fruitful in furniſhing terms for expreſſing all our thoughts, we muſt ſometimes imprint them by reſemblances. "Rien (ſays the abbé de Bellegarde) n'embellit tant le diſcours, que le bon uſage

uſage des metaphores ; ſouvent des mots aſſez communs dans leur uſage propre, deviennent des locutions très-élegantes, quand on les prend dans un ſens métaphorique. J'ai ſouvent remarqué en liſant les livres des meilleurs auteurs, que ce qui attache & ce qui frappe d'avantage, ce ſont certaines expreſſions que l'on tranſporte du naturel au figuré *. The true genius in poets generally diſplays itſelf in their metaphors ; for it is only a lively and unbounded imagination that ſees all the relations and ſimilitudes of an object, or action, at one glance of thought ; that diſtinguiſhes in an inſtant every circumſtance wherein the agreement or diſagreement conſiſts : if fine ſimiles are thinly ſown in a poet's works, we may pronounce him an ordinary genius. It

* Réflexions ſur l'Elegance & la Politeſſe du Stile, p. 168.

is Homer's poems, above all others, which contain the greateſt number and the moſt beautiful. It would be endleſs to quote all the inſtances in celebrated works of the efficacy of metaphors; but the nature of my ſubject requires that I ſhould produce ſome that are remarkable. Nothing, as Longinus obſerves, moves more than ſeveral metaphors combined together; for when two or three are linked together in firm confederacy, they communicate ſtrength, efficacy, and beauty to one another. Thus when Milton deſcribes Satan, he ſtrikes our imagination greatly by the force of two noble metaphors:

He, above the reſt,
In ſhape and geſture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tow'r; his form had yet not loſt
All her original brightneſs, nor appear'd
Leſs than archangel ruin'd, and th'exceſs
Of glory obſcur'd; as when the ſun new riſen
Looks thro' the horizontal miſty air,

Shorn

Shorn of his beams ; or from behind the moon
In dim eclipſe diſaſtrous twilight ſheds
O'er half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs *.

The beauty of this paſſage is greatly heightened by comparing the ſtature of Satan to a tower ; and his clouded majeſty to the riſing ſun looking through the miſty air, and when in an eclipſe. Theſe metaphors, which are worthy the imagination of Milton, gives us a ſtrong idea of the thing he paints; more ſo than forty lines could have done without their aſſiſtance.

Shakeſpear was a great maſter in all the arts of compoſition ; we find in all his works many noble ſtrokes of genius. He excelled in the artful uſe of metaphors ; the following beautiful paſſage

* Paradiſe Loſt, book i. ver. 590.

is

is an inſtance, not only of a metaphor well applied, but of a metaphorical expreſſion and expreſſive epithets. In his Twelfth Night, the Duke aſks Viola in diſguiſe, her pretended ſiſter's ſtory; ſhe anſwers,

A blank, my lord; ſhe never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i'th' bud,
Feed on her damaſk cheek: She pin'd in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She ſat, like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief*.

In theſe few lines, which are as great and beautiful almoſt as any that ever were wrote, the whole animated force of poetry is exhauſted in a ſtriking combination of metaphors, epithets and images; the comparing her concealed love to a worm in the bud; the epithet *damaſk* cheek, the metaphorical expreſſions *green and yellow* melancholy, ſo finely adapted

* Vide Theobald's Shakeſpear, vol. iii. p. 129.

to

to the ſubject; and laſtly the compariſon of the ſilent calmneſs of her paſſion to Patience on a monument ſmiling at grief, which forms a ſtriking image; all concur to render theſe lines infinitely beautiful, and to convince us that they are the produce of a moſt exuberant poetic imagination.

In Macbeth, life is compared to ſeveral things, in a ſtring of metaphors that ſtrengthen each other:

Out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking ſhadow; a poor play'r,
That ſtruts and frets his hour upon the ſtage,
And then is heard no more! It is a tale
Told by an ideot, full of ſound and fury,
Signifying nothing *!

Mr. Rowe's Jane Shore will afford me another inſtance of the beauty of ſeveral metaphors combined in one paſſage:

* Shakeſp. vol. vi. p. 340.

Shore,

Shore, ſpeaking of the unfortunate fate of women, ſays,

If poor weak woman ſwerve from virtue's rule,
If, ſtrongly charm'd, ſhe leaves the *thorny way*,
And in the *ſofter paths* of pleaſure ſtray;
Ruin enſues, reproach, and endleſs ſhame,
And one falſe *ſtep* entirely damns her fame:
In vain with tears the loſs ſhe may deplore,
In vain look back to what ſhe was before,
She *ſets*, like *ſtars that fall*, to *riſe* no more*.

I need not point out to the reader what a fine effect the metaphors in theſe lines have, eſpecially that in the laſt; they are indeed the very life of it; and although the poetry here riſes much above what Rowe's genius generally produced, yet the moſt moving and apparent beauties are entirely owing to a ſeaſonable uſe of the metaphor.

A ſingle metaphor, when well applied, equally enlivens a diſcourſe, and throws

* Act I. ſcene II.

a beau-

a beauty over a paſſage ſuperior to what reſults from any other figure. Thus Longinus, by comparing Homer, in the Odyſſey to the ſetting ſun, expreſſes his idea in a much clearer and more noble manner than he could otherwiſe poſſibly have done: It is one of the fineſt ſimiles the wit of man ever produced.

Οθεν εν τη Οδυσσειᾳ παρεικασαι τις αν καλα-δυομενω τον Ομηρον ηλιω, ϗ διχα της σφοδροτητος παραμενει το μεγεθος *.

The metaphor gives a greater ornament, ſtrength, and grandeur to a diſcourſe, than any other figure; the reader may have often obſerved, that the moſt exquiſite expreſſions are generally metaphorical, and derive all their merit from

* So that in the Odyſſey, Homer may with juſtice be reſembled to the ſetting ſun, whoſe grandeur ſtill remains, without the meridian heat of his beams. Sec. 9.

that figure. Indeed it has the peculiar advantage, according to Quintilian's obſervation, to ſhine from its own light in the moſt celebrated pieces, and to diſtinguiſh itſelf moſt in them. It enriches a language in ſome meaſure, by an infinity of expreſſions, by ſubſtituting the figurative in the room of the ſimple or plain; it throws a great variety into the ſtyle; it raiſes and aggrandizes the moſt minute and common things; it gives us great pleaſure by the ingenious boldneſs with which it ſtrikes out in queſt of foreign expreſſions, inſtead of the natural ones which are at hand; it deceives the mind agreeably, by ſhewing it one thing and meaning another: In fine, it gives a body, if we may ſo ſay, to the moſt ſpirited things, and makes them almoſt the objects of hearing and ſight, by the ſenſible images it delineates to the imagina-

imagination †. Thus when Demoſthenes compares Philip to a fever, he ſtrikes us by the ſtrength of his metaphor:

Επει οτι γε ωσπερ περιοδος η καταβολη πυρετος η τινος αλλης κακης — προσερχεται *.

Otway's Venice Preſerved will afford me a remarkable inſtance of the efficacy of a metaphor that borrows its alluſion from an object extremely different from the ſubject he deſcribes.

Homer's deſcription of Apollo breaking down the Grecian wall is very noble, and the metaphor amazingly beautiful:

Then with his hand he ſhook the mighty wall,
And lo! the turrets nod, the bulwarks fall:
Eaſy as when aſhore an infant ſtands,
And draws imagin'd houſes in the ſands;
The ſportive wanton, pleas'd with ſome new play,
Sweeps the ſlight works and faſhion'd domes away.

† Vide Rollin, vol. ii. ar. 5.
* Demoſth. Philip. III. p. 69. Morel.

Pierre, in Venice Preſerved, telling Jaffier what great advantage their cauſe will reap from ſucceſs in their deſigns, compares the lazy ſenators to unclean birds:

Fools ſhall be pull'd
From wiſdom's ſeat; thoſe baleful unclean birds,
Thoſe lazy owls, who (perch'd near fortune's top)
Sit only watchful with their heavy wings
To cuff down new-fledg'd virtues, that would riſe
To nobler heights, and make the grove harmonious *.

This paſſage is very beautiful, and the ſimile purſued with great ſpirit and poetic fire: Although the alluſion is drawn from quite a foreign object, yet it is plain and ſtriking. The ſame may be obſerved of one of Dryden's ſimiles:

So ſhould my honour, like a riſing ſwan,
Break with her wings the falling drops away,
And proudly plough the waves †.

* Act II. ſcene I. † Don Sebaſtian, act IV.

Thus

Thus Dr. Young uſes one of thoſe diſtant compariſons with great judgment:

As it is bold and vain (ſays he), ſo perhaps, it has always been prejudicial to the truth, to labour at rational evictions of ſacred myſteries; for by theſe means men attempt to comprehend the divine nature, by putting it under ſome injurious diſguiſe; *as we venture to gaze at the ſun, after we have watched him into a cloud* *.

The meaning here would have been underſtood without the help of this metaphor; but concluding it in that figurative manner throws a beauty over the whole ſentence, and pleaſes the imagination at the ſame time that it ſatisfies the underſtanding. Mr. Maſon's Elfrida contains alſo two inſtances of this ſpecies of figures. He compares jealouſy to the twining ivy:

See, Elfrida,
Ah ſee! how round yon branching elm the ivy

* Centaur not fabulous. His Works, vol. iv. p. 118.

Twines its green chain, and poiſons what ſup-
ports it;
Not leſs injurious to the blooming ſhoots
Of growing love, is ſickly jealouſy †.

The jealouſy of love would not be apt to raiſe an idea in our minds of ivy twining about a tree, had we not ſeen theſe lines; but yet nothing can be more expreſſive, nor can we help being ſtruck at the reſemblance; the expreſſive metaphorical epithets, *blooming ſhoots* of *growing love*, heighten the ſpirit of the poetry. The other paſſage abounds in ſeveral very beautiful ſimilitudes:

No, fond Elfrida,
His full-*plum'd* ſoul is *wing'd* for nobler *flights:*
There let it *ſoar*, nor like the *lofty lark*,
That rides the ſun-beam warbling, ſudden *drop*,
And *rooſt* itſelf in the *low earthly furrow* *.

Theſe lines would alone ſhew the efficacy of metaphorical expreſſions; and

† Page 13. * Page 16.

yet

yet ſome modern authors, in the remarks they have made on the beauty of ſtyle, condemn them as if they were contrary to the genius of our language; they are willing that it ſhould flow from its ſource, and diſapprove the uſe of borrowed expreſſions, which they compare to thoſe artificial waters that are brought into gardens by force of art. I believe that it might be ſaid at all times, without hurting the reſpect due to thoſe great maſters, that metaphorical expreſſions are perhaps the greateſt ornaments of our language. It is in the invention of thoſe rich and happy expreſſions, that appears the addreſs and good taſte of thoſe who know how to write politely. " Il ne faut (ſays the abbé de Bellegarde) qu'ouvrir leurs livres, on en trouve à chaque page; pour bien exprimer une choſe, ils ſe ſervent d'un mot, qui ne lui

eſt pas propre, & que l'uſage a appliqué à un autre ſujet ; c'eſt en quoi conſiſte la délicateſſe & la fineſſe de l'expreſſion, lorſqu'on tranſporte de certaines termes de la choſe qu'ils ſignifient proprement à un autre qu'ils ne ſignifient qu'indirectement *.

Mr. Pope's poems abound in numberleſs inſtances of beautiful metaphorical expreſſions : The following lines contain a very fine one.

In the ſoul while memory prevails,
The ſolid power of underſtanding fails ;
Where beams of bright imagination play,
The memory's ſoft figures melt away ‡.

" I hardly believe there is in any language, ſays Mr. Warton, a metaphor more appoſitely applied, or more ele-

* Reflexions ſur l'Elegance & la Politeſſe du Stile, p. 176.

‡ Eſſay on Criticiſm, ver. 56.

gantly

gantly expreſſed than this, of the effects of the warmth of fancy ‖. Longinus ſomewhere ſays, that a metaphor never pleaſes more than when we can hardly diſcern that it is a metaphor; an obſervation illuſtrated by the above lines. Another paſſage of this celebrated poet's works, will afford one of the fineſt metaphorical expreſſions that ever was wrote:

Tho' the ſame ſun, with all-diffuſive rays,
Bluſh in the roſe, and in the di'mond blaze.
Moral Eſſays.

This figure of rhetoric is certainly the moſt univerſal enlivener of poetry: At the ſame time that it adds to the dignity of verſe, it gives it an agreeable variety, together with a power of painting out all its images in the boldeſt and ſtrongeſt manner in the world †: It is this which animates

‖ Eſſay on Pope, p. 116.

† Spence's Eſſay on Pope's Odyſſey, p. 28. The abbé de Bellegarde, ſpeaking of figurative expreſſions,

animates thoſe objects which muſt otherwiſe be ſtill and unaffecting; it flings every thing into motion, life, and action. It is not only of uſe in ſtriking the imagination with great and ſublime ideas,

expreſſions, ſays, " Voici le plus grand myſtere de la langue; c'eſt proprement dans les expreſſions figurées que conſiſte l'elegance & la politeſſe du ſtile; ceux qui prétendent à la gloire de bien ecrire, n'y reuſſiront que par là.

" Quand on manque d'un terme fait pour exprimer ce qu'on veut dire, on ſe ſert de figures, de détours, de circonlocutions, de ſorte qu'une expreſſion eſt figurée, lorſqu'on employe un mot, non pas dans ſa ſignification propre & naturelle, mais dans un ſignification empruntée. C'eſt dans le choix de ces locutions, que paroît le génie, l'habileté, & le gout de ceux qui parlent: Car un mot qui ſeroit peut-être bas, & populaire dans ſa ſignification propre, devient ſublime & noble, quand on l'employe au figuré. Les mots reſſemblent en quelque façon aux légumes, qui ſont naturellement fades, mais qui ont un goût merveilleux, quand elles ſon bien apprêtées: ainſi des termes bas & fades deviennent piquants, quand ils ſont bien mis en œuvre."

Reflexions, &c. p. 204.

marked

marked in the moſt expreſſive manner, but it pleaſes the fancy in the delineation of ſofter images. Dr. Burk, in comparing great with moderate abilities, was enabled by means of a moſt beautiful metaphorical expreſſion, to enliven a dry ſubject in a moſt poetic manner:

Thoſe perſons (ſays he) who creep into the hearts of moſt people, who are choſen as the companions of their ſofter hours, and their reliefs from care and anxiety, are never perſons of ſhining qualities, nor ſtrong virtues: It is rather the *ſoft green* of the ſoul on which we reſt our eyes, that are fatigued with beholding more glaring objects *.

The Rambler has much the ſame metaphor on the ſame ſubject:

But though theſe men may be for a time heard with applauſe and admiration, they ſeldom delight us long. We enjoy them a little, and then retire to eaſineſs and good-humour; as the eye

* Philoſophical Enquiry, p. 93.

gazes

gazes a while on eminences glittering with the ſun, but ſoon turns aching away, to verdure and flowers *.

That theſe paſſages are very beautiful, nobody in their ſenſes will deny; and ſurely it will be allowed, that their moſt ſtriking beauties are owing to the metaphors that conclude them.

When Jane Shore is turned out in the moſt melancholy condition, ſhe reflects on her misfortunes, and at laſt comforts herſelf with a faint idea of finding an end to her miſeries.

And hark! methinks the roar that late purſu'd me,
Sinks like the murmurs of the falling wind,
And ſoftens into ſilence †.

How poetically beautiful are theſe three lines; but their beauty is entirely owing

* Vol. ii. p. 94. † Rowe's Works, vol. ii. p. 163.

to

to the metaphor they clothe: Rowe could not have expreſſed his idea ſo clearly, nor with half the elegance, in twenty lines without the help of a ſimile.

Shakeſpear diſplayed a great knowledge of the human mind, when he compared the confuſed thoughts of a lover to the inarticulate joys of a crowd:

Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood ſpeaks to you in my veins;
And there is ſuch confuſion in my pow'rs,
As after ſome oration fairly ſpoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleaſed multitude;
Where every ſomething being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, ſave of joy,
Expreſs'd, and not expreſs'd *.

The metaphor is in this paſſage amplified through ſeveral lines, in a manner that cannot but raiſe the poetry; one

* Vol. ii. p. 133.

ſurely

ſurely muſt obſerve what perſpicuity this figure gives to the explanation of a poet's ideas. In his Romeo and Juliet, he alſo has a very beautiful metaphor, in which he compares the parting of lovers to a wanton's bird :

I would have thee gone;
And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,
That lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor pris'ner in his twiſted gyves,
And with a ſilk-thread plucks it back again;
So loving jealous of his liberty.

Could Addiſon have given us a deſcription of a general commanding in the heat of battle, that would have ſtruck us in the manner of the following amplification, where he is compared to an angel riding in a whirlwind.

So when an angel, by divine command,
With riſing tempeſts ſhakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia paſt,
Calm and ſerene he drives the furious blaſt;

And

And, pleas'd th'Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the ſtorm *.

Cicero ſays, "Modus nullus eſt florentior; nec qui plus luminis afferat orationi †." His words may, with great juſtneſs, be applied to this metaphor of Mr. Addiſon, where no other figure could have thrown ſo much light on his deſcription of the battle.

Now I have mentioned Addiſon, the reader will excuſe my quoting another metaphor from his poems, which is extremely beautiful:

So, where our wide Numidian waſtes extend,
Sudden th'impetuous hurricanes deſcend,
Wheel thro' the air, in circling eddies play,
Tear up the ſands, and ſweep whole plains away.
The helpleſs traveller with wild ſurprize,
Sees the dry deſart all around him riſe,
And, ſmother'd in the duſty whirlwind, dies.

* Addiſon's Works, vol. i. p. 78.
† De Oratore, lib. iii.

"Thus

" Thus Syphax (ſays the Guardian) when he is forming to himſelf the unexpected and ſudden deſtruction which is to befal the man he hates, expreſſes himſelf in an image which none but a Numidian could have a lively ſenſe of; but yet if the author had ranged over all the objects upon the face of the earth, he could not have found a repreſentation of a diſaſter ſo great, ſo ſudden, and ſo dreadful as this ‡."

The moſt common ideas, and the loweſt deſcriptions, are never ſo well expreſſed as by a ſimile. Thus Shakeſpear pleaſes us greatly by making a compariſon of the tears on a woman's cheek to the dew on a lilly:

When I did name her brothers, then freſh tears
Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey-dew
Upon a gather'd lilly almoſt wither'd ‖.

‡ Guardian, vol. i. No. 64.
‖ Vol. vi. p. 225. Titus Andronicus.

And

And again,

The air hath ſtarv'd the roſes in her cheeks,
And pinch'd the lilly-tincture of her face *.

"Eſt hoc (ſays Cicero) magnum ornamentum orationis, in quo obſcuritas fugienda eſt †." And Mr. Addiſon, with his uſual perſpicuity, very juſtly obſerves, that the mixture of inconſiſtent metaphors is a great grievance in the commonwealth of letters. There is not any thing in the world which may not be compared to ſeveral things, if conſidered in ſeveral diſtinct lights; or, in other words, the ſame things may be expreſſed by different metaphors. But the miſchief is, that an unſkillful author ſhall run theſe metaphors ſo abſurdly into one another, that there ſhall be no ſimile, no agreeable picture, no apt reſemblance, but confu-

* Vol. i. p. 199. Two Gentlemen of Verona.
† De Oratore, lib. iii.

ſion, obſcurity, and noiſe. Thus I have known a hero compared to a thunderbolt, a lion to the ſea; all and each of them proper metaphors for impetuoſity, courage, and force: But by bad management, it hath ſo happened, that the thunder-bolt hath over-flowed its banks, the lion hath been darted through the ſkies, and the billows have rolled out of the Libyan deſart *. Mr. Spence, in his Eſſay on Pope's Odyſſey, gives us, from that work, a multitude of inſtances of claſhing metaphors. The force of metaphor is to make things ſtrong, clear, and ſenſible; any confuſion deſtroys the very end of it, and a little inaccuracy may occaſion groſs errors this way: Amongſt ſome inſtances produced by that ingenious gentleman, the following are remarkable:

* Spectator, vol. viii. No. 595.

Now

Now from my *fond embrace* by tempeſts tor n,
Our other *column of the ſtate* is born,
Nor took a *kind adieu.*

And again,

They *ſweep* Neptune's ſmooth *face.*

And in another place,

Declining with his *ſloping wheels*
Down *ſunk* the *ſun* *.

To ſay the god of light was driving his car down the ſteep of heaven (as Mr. Pope ſomewhere expreſſes it) is metaphorical; to ſay the ſun is ſetting is proper; but ſhould one ſay the ſun is ſetting with ſloping wheels, this would be neither metaphorical nor proper; nor could it raiſe any thing in the mind but a confuſion of ideas.

Shakeſpear, with all his excellencies, abounds in theſe inconſiſtent metaphors:

* Page 30.

There is a great deal of poetic fire in the following lines; but ſure the metaphor does not throw the leaſt perſpicuity over the paſſage, nor does it enable Romeo to raiſe a great idea of his love for Juliet, to whom the ſpeech is addreſſed.

She ſpeaks!
Oh ſpeak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this ſight, being o'er my head,
As is a winged meſſenger from heav'n
Unto the white, upturned, wond'ring eyes
Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
When he beſtrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
And ſails upon the boſom of the air *.

There is ſomething extremely poetic in the two laſt lines; but the metaphor, as I ſaid before, is inconſiſtent and extravagant. In his Macbeth, the following ſimile, I apprehend, will not pleaſe many readers:

The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

* Vol. viii. p. 32.

He

He had before ſaid,

There's nothing ſerious in mortality:
All is but toys; renown and grace are dead*.

Had he omitted his metaphor, his meaning would have been to the full as clear, and I think as elegantly expreſſed.

As to expreſſive epithets, the reader muſt have obſerved, that the moſt beautiful and ſtriking are generally metaphorical, and conſequently have been already treated of; yet there are ſome that are very pictureſque and ſtriking, though not of that ſpecies. Thus, in Jane Shore, the following lines receive great luſtre from them:

My form, alas! has long forgot to pleaſe,
The ſcene of beauty and delight is chang'd;
No roſes bloom upon my fading cheek,
Nor *laughing* graces *wanton* in my eyes;

* Vol. vi. p. 295.

But *haggard* grief, *lean-looking ſallow* care,
And *pining* diſcontent, a *rueful* train,
Dwell on my brow, all hideous and forlorn *.

Theſe lines ſhow very plainly the force of expreſſive epithets, and indeed the very ſoul of the paſſage. Mr. Pope excelled greatly in this ornament of poetry; witneſs the following,

The *gracious dew* of pulpit eloquence,
And all the *well-whipt cream* of courtly ſenſe †.

Virgil and Homer would afford innumerable inſtances of the efficacy of expreſſive epithets, indeed too many for me to quote an hundredth part of them. Though the following is very beautiful, Virgil ſeems particularly fond of the word *pendere*.

Pendent opera interrupta, minæque
Murorum ingentes, æquataque machina cœlo ‡.

* Rowe's Works, vol. ii. p. 114.
† Pope's Works, vol. iv. p. 226.
‡ Æn. iv. 88.

Every

Every expreſſion here is very poetical, eſpecially *minæ ingentes murorum*, which is quite pictureſque; but the word *pendent* very much heightens the deſcription. Nothing can be more beautiful than the following lines,

Interea dulces pendent circum oſcula nati *.

Ille ubi complexu Æneæ colloque pependit †.

Mr. Maſon, in his Elfrida, has a ſhort paſſage which contains ſome epithets very pictureſque:

The delicate ſoft tints
Of ſnowy innocence, the crimſon glow
Of bluſhing modeſty, there both fly off,
And leave the faded face no nobler boaſt
Than well-rang'd lifeleſs features ‡.

It may be ſaid that the *ſoft tints of ſnowy innocence* is a metaphorical expreſſion; but that beautiful one, *crimſon glow of bluſhing modeſty*, is a pure epithet, and greatly enlivens the whole paſſage.

* Georg. ii. 523. † Æn. i. 719. ‡ p. 15.

Thoſe in the following lines are very beautiful, and the metaphor in them very juſt ;

O have you ſeen, bath'd in the morning dew,
The budding roſe its infant bloom diſplay ;
When firſt its virgin tints unfold to view,
It ſhrinks, and ſcarcely truſts the blaze of day.
So ſoft, ſo delicate, ſo ſweet ſhe came,
Youth's damaſk glow juſt dawning on her cheek:
I gaz'd, I ſigh'd, I caught the tender flame,
Felt the fond pang, and droop'd with paſſion weak †.

I ſhall not take up any more of the reader's time in proving how much expreſſive epithets ornament a diſcourſe: They are certainly the very life of ſome ſpecies of compoſition; eſpecially the deſcriptive, which raiſes and animates in a wonderful manner. I ſhall conclude with the words of the abbé de Bellegarde: " La vivacité de l'expreſſion conſiſte dans

† Cynthia. Dodſley's poems, vol, vi. p. 237.

l'aſſemblage de certains termes énergiques, qui mettent ſous les yeux ce que l'on penſe : Il en eſt à peu près comme de certains traits de burin bien enfoncez, ou de ces coups de pinceau hardis & heureux, qui repreſentent au naturel la perſonne dont on fait le portrait. Pour s'exprimer vivement, il faut d'ordinaire le faire en peu de mots; la multitude des paroles rend l'expreſſion languiſſante, & lui ôte ce feu, qui la rend vive & animée. C'eſt s'exprimer vivement que de ramaſſer un grand ſens en peu de paroles, ce ſont comme des images naturelles de la penſée. Rien ne donne plus de grace au diſcours, qu'une epithete bien placée ; au contraire, les epithetes vagues & inutiles le rendent inſipide & languiſſant. Certaines locutions qui frappent, qui éblouïſſent, & qui paroiſſent ſi elegantes, doivent tout leur éclat, & tout leur agrément

ment a des epithetes riches & heureuſes qui expriment vivement & délicatement ce qu'on veut dire. L'eſprit & la vivacité d'un auteur paroit dans le choix des epithetes qu'il met en œuvre *.

SECT. V.

NOTHING can be more directly oppoſite to the genius of the Engliſh language than ſwelling and bombaſt expreſſions: A noble thought ought to be expreſſed with energy and force; but nothing can differ more than the ſublime and bombaſt in compoſition. To employ ſonorous and magnificent language to clothe a little, trifling, or common thought, is one of the greateſt abſurdities that an author can be guilty of; whatever is unnatural cannot pleaſe readers

* Réflexions ſur l'Elegance, &c. p. 26—74.

of

of taſte; and ſurely nothing can be more diametrically oppoſite to nature than turgid and ſwelling expreſſions, points, and quibbles, and low expreſſions. I am ſorry to ſay it, but many Engliſh authors of the firſt claſs, and eſpecially our poets, have given into the uſe of theſe falſe ornaments to diſcourſe. The immortal Shakeſpear is full of them; half the fire of Lee's tragic genius is exhauſted in the magnificence of his diction; all his thoughts are hid behind a cloud of words: Dryden's tragedies would afford innumerable inſtances of fuſtian. It would be endleſs to name all the authors that have disfigured their works by the miſapplication of pompous epithets, and obſcured their meaning by what the French very properly call Les jeux de mots.

Shakeſpear's imagination was certainly clouded when he wrote the following lines:

The

The city caſt
Her people out upon her, and Anthony,
Enthron'd i'th' market-place, did ſit alone,
Whiſtling to the air, which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
And made a gap in nature ‡.

The thought here is extravagant, unnatural, and abſurd. Dryden himſelf could hardly exceed this ſtretch even of the hyperbole itſelf; and yet he has wrote as heroic pieces of nonſenſe as moſt authors, witneſs the following: A lover ſays,

My wound is great, becauſe it is ſo ſmall.

The celebrated duke of Buckingham immediately cried out,

Then 'twould be greater, were it none at all.

On which the play was inſtantly damned *.

‡ Antony and Cleopatra.

* Walpole's Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, vol. ii. p. 79.

Arioſto

Arioſto, in one of his extravagant thoughts, I believe exceeded any thing of the kind that ever was wrote:

Il pover huomo che non ſen'era accorto
Andava combattendo, & era morto.

Theſe words are ſpoke by one of his heroes; in Engliſh, "That in the heat of the engagement, not perceiving that he was killed, he ſtill fought on vigorouſly, as dead as he was †."

A very ingenious author of the preſent age, to whom the Engliſh language is greatly indebted, but too often ſwells his diction into bombaſt: I could produce many inſtances of it, but the following one is remarkable:

Thoſe who deſire to partake of the pleaſure of wit, muſt contribute to its production; ſince the

† La Maniere de bien penſer les Ouvrages d'Eſprit, p. 14.

mind

mind ſtagnates without external ventilation; and that effervescence of the fancy which flaſhes into tranſport, can be raiſed only by the infuſion of diſſimilar ideas ‡.

Quintilian obſerves, that "Prima eſt eloquentiæ virtus perſpicuitas." And again, "Plerumque accidit, ut faciliora ſint ad intelligendum & lucidiora multo, quæ a doctiſſimo quoque dicuntur." Few, I believe will diſpute this authority; but what ſhall we ſay to the above bombaſt, which is laboured into obſcurity? Is it not ſurprizing, that an author, who in ſome of his eſſays writes the moſt elegant language, ſhould fall into ſuch littleneſs of compoſition *? The idea was juſt about as well expreſſed as one

‡ Rambler, vol. ii. No. 101.

* Expreſſion is the dreſs of thought, and ſtill
Appears more decent, as more ſuitable;
A vile conceit in pompous words expreſs'd,
Is like a clown in regal purple dreſs'd.
Eſſay on Criticiſm.

in

in Shakeſpeare's Twelfth Night: Olivia aſks Viola how the Duke loves her, to which ſhe anſwers,

With adorations, with fertile tears,
With groans that thunder love, with ſighs of fire ‡.

The ſame play affords a curious inſtance of quibbling, far beneath the genius of Shakeſpear:

Sir And. O had I but follow'd the arts!
Sir Tob. Then had'ſt thou had an excellent head of hair.
Sir And. Why, would that have mended my hair?
Sir Tob. Paſt queſtion; for thou ſeeſt it will not curl by nature *.

In Hamlet, Polonius, ſpeaking to the Queen, ſays

'Tis true, 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis, 'tis true; a fooliſh figure——
And farewell it.

Fooliſh, indeed. Another pun in the ſame play is almoſt as good.

‡ Vol. iii. p. 117. * Vol. iii. p. 107.

Ham.

Ham. And what did your enact?
Pol. I did enact Julius Cæſar, I was kill'd i'th' Capitol; Brutus kill'd me.
Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill ſo capital a calf there.

Dryden is almoſt as faulty. In All for Love, Ventidius tells Antony that he was framed

So perfect, that the gods, who form'd you, wonder'd
At their own ſkill, and cry'd, A lucky hit
Has mended our deſign!

Alas! poor Mr. Bayes! this is the very height of the bombaſt. Ventidius has a fine knack at the outrée; he ſays that Cleopatra's eyes

have power beyond Theſſalian charms,
To draw the moon from heav'n.

The Italians have given into this fuſtian and punning ſpecies of compoſition more than other nations in Europe. Taſſo's Gieruſalemme is full of it; amidſt

ſome of the fineſt flights of imagination, and the moſt elegant language, we are continually meeting with that tinſel and bombaſt which diſguſts a reader of taſte: I muſt quote a deſcription of the univerſal effects of love from another of their poets.

Mira d'intorno, Silvio,
Quanto il mondo hà di vago, e di gentile,
Opra e d'amore. Amante è il cielo, amante
La terra, amante il mare.
Quella, che làſſu miri innanzi all'alba
Coſi leggiadra ſtella,
Ama d'amor anch'ella, e del ſuo figlio
Sente le fiamme: ed eſſa, che innamora
Innamorata ſplende:
E queſta è forſe l'hora,
Che le furtive ſue dolcezze e'l ſeno
Del caro amante laſcia:
Vedila pur, come sfavilla e ride.
Amano per le ſelve
Le monſtruoſe fere; aman per l'onde
I veloci delfini, e l'orche gravi *.

* Paſtor Fido, act I. ſcene I.

Was there ever any thing more extravagant than to make the ſun, ſtars, bears, dolphins, and whales, all in love, and the ſea itſelf ready to boil over with it.

Pope's thought of its original is almoſt as extravagant :

I know thee, love! on foreign mountains bred,
Wolves gave thee ſuck, and ſavage tygers fed;
Thou wert from Ætna's burning entrails torn,
Got by fierce whirlwinds, and in thunder born *.

There is ſomething ſo low and little in quibbling, that it is amazing an author of genius ſhould ever fall into ſo abſurd a cuſtom. Shakeſpear's pun on the word Rome is well known :

This is Rome indeed,
And room enough.

Generally ſpeaking, there is no wit in quibbling, or very little; nothing coſts

* Paſtorals. Works, vol. i. p. 31.

leſs,

leſs, or is more eaſily found. Ambiguity, which makes up its character, is leſs an ornament of diſcourſe than a fault; and it is that which makes it inſipid; eſpecially when he who uſes it, thinks he ſpeaks finely, and values himſelf upon it. On the other ſide, it is not always eaſy to be underſtood; the myſterious appearance which gives it the double meaning, is the occaſion that a man cannot often come at the true ſenſe without ſome pains; and when he is come at it, he is ſorry for his labour; he thinks himſelf cheated, and I cannot tell but that what he feels at ſuch a time is a ſort of vexation for having ſearched ſo long to find nothing. All theſe reaſons ſink the credit of pure quibbles very low with men of good ſenſe *.

" Low

* A parler en général, il n'y a point d'eſprit dans l'equivoque, ou il y en a fort peu. Rien

" Low and ſordid thoughts (ſays Longinus) are terrible blemiſhes to fine ſentiments. Thoſe of Herodotus, in his deſcription of a tempeſt, are divinely noble; but the terms in which they are expreſſed very much tarniſh and impair the luſtre. Thus when he ſays, " The ſeas began to *ſeethe*," how does the uncouth ſound of the word *ſeethe* leſſen the gran-

ne coute moins, & ne ſe trouve plus facilement. L'ambiguité en quoi conſiſte ſon caractere, eſt moins un ornement du diſcours qu'un defaut; & c'eſt ce qui la rend inſipide, ſur tout quand celui qui s'en ſert y entend fineſſe, & s'en fait honneur. D'un autre côté elle n'eſt pas toujours aiſée à entendre: l'apparence myſterieuſe que lui donne ſon double ſens, fait ſouvent qu'on ne va pas au véritable, ſans quelque peine; & quand on y eſt parvenu on a regret à ſa peine, on ſe croit joué, & je ne ſçai ſi ce qu'on ſent alors n'eſt pas une maniere de depit, d'avoir cherché pour ne rien trouver. Toutes ces raiſons décreditent fort les pures équivoques parmi les perſonnes de bon ſens.

La Maniere de bien penſer, p. 23.

deur?

deur? And further, "The wind (ſays he) was *tired out*, and thoſe who were wrecked in the ſtorm ended their lives very *diſagreeably*." To be *tired out* is a mean and vulgar term; and that *diſagreeably*, a word highly diſproportioned to the tragical event it is uſed to expreſs *."

Words become low by the occaſions to which they are applied, or the general character of them who uſe them; and the diſguſt which they produce ariſes

* Δεινὴ δ' αἰσχῦναι τὰ μεγέθη καὶ ἡ μικρότης τ. ὀνομάτων. παρὰ γῶν τῶ Ἡροδότω καῖα μὲν τὰ λήμματα δαιμονίως ὁ χειμὼν πεφρασαὶ, τινὰ δὲ νὴ Δία περιέχει τῆς ὕλης ἀδοξότερα, καὶ τῦτο μὲν ἴσως, 'ζέσασης δὲ τῆς θαλάσσης.' ὡς τὸ 'ζεσάσης' πολὺ τὸ ὕψος περισπᾶ, διὰ τὸ κακόσημον. ἄμ', 'ὁ ἄνεμος, φησὶν, ἐκοπίασε.' καὶ τὰς περὶ τὸ ναυάγιον δρασσομένας ἐξεδέχετο 'τέλος ἄχαρι.' ἄσημον γὰρ τὸ 'κοπιάσαι' καὶ ἰδιώτικον· τὸ δ' 'ἄχαρι,' τηλικύτῳ πάθει ἀνοίκειον.

Long. Περὶ Ὕψους, § 43.

from the revival of thoſe images with which they are commonly united. Thus, if in the moſt ſolemn diſcourſe, a phraſe happens to occur which has been ſucceſsfully employed in ſome ludicrous narrative, the graveſt auditor finds it difficult to refrain from laughter; when they who are not prepoſſeſſed by the ſame accidental aſſociation, are utterly unable to gueſs the reaſon of his merriment. Words which convey ideas of dignity in one age, are baniſhed from elegant writing or converſation in another, becauſe they are in time debaſed by vulgar mouths, and can be no longer heard without the involuntary recollection of unpleaſing images.

When Macbeth is confirming himſelf in the horrid purpoſe of ſtabbing his king, he breaks out, amidſt his emotions,

tions, into a wiſh natural to a murderer

Come, thick night!
And pall thee in the dunneſt ſmoak of hell,
That my keen knife ſee not the wound it makes,
Nor heav'n peep thro' the blanket of the dark,
To cry, Hold! hold!

In this paſſage is exerted all the force of poetry, that force which calls new powers into being, which embodies ſentiment, and animates matter: yet, perhaps, ſcarce any man now peruſes it without ſome diſturbance of his attention from the counteraction of the words to the ideas. What can be more dreadful than to implore the preſence of night, inveſted, not in common obſcurity, but in the *ſmoak of hell?* yet the efficacy of this invocation is deſtroyed by the inſertion of an epithet now ſeldom heard but in the ſtable, and *dun* night may come or go without any other notice than contempt.

We cannot ſurely but ſympathize with the horror of a wretch about to murder his maſter, his friend, his benefactor; who ſuſpects that the weapon will refuſe its office, and ſtart back from the breaſt which he is preparing to violate? yet this ſentiment is weakened by the name of an inſtrument uſed by butchers and cooks in the meaneſt employments; we do not immediately conceive that any crime of importance is to be committed with a *knife*; or who does not, at laſt, from the long habit of connecting a knife with ſordid offices, feel averſion rather than terror?

Macbeth proceeds to wiſh, in the madneſs of guilt, that the inſpection of heaven may be intercepted, and that he may in the involutions of infernal darkneſs eſcape the eye of Providence. This is the utmoſt

moſt extravagance of determined wickedneſs; yet this is ſo debaſed by two unfortunate words, that while I endeavour to impreſs on my reader the energy of the ſentiment, I can ſcarce check my riſibility when the expreſſion forces itſelf upon my mind; for who, without ſome relaxation of his gravity, can hear of the avengers of guilt *peeping through a blanket**?

In ſhort, it would be endleſs to produce all the inſtances of the bombaſt, or of low expreſſions, that modern authors would afford; there is certainly nothing that ſpoils a diſcourſe ſo much as falſe orments, and an affectation of expreſſing every little idea in high-ſounding and

* Rambler, vol. iv. No. 168. Whoſe remarks on this paſſage were ſo much to my preſent purpoſe, as to occaſion my quoting it at length.

pompous

pompous phraſes; nor does it need any argument to convince the reader of taſte, that low words, when met with, even in a noble compoſition, diſguſt: theſe opinions are too well known, and too univerſally allowed, to be diſputed.

SECT. VI.

THAT the ſound in poetry is oftentimes adapted to the ſenſe, it would be ſtupidity to deny, as the fact is evident in the works of a multitude of authors. But it muſt certainly be allowed, that different people form very different ideas of this poetic beauty; and that many imagine they diſcern it in paſſages which make no ſuch impreſſion on others. Thus the following lines in the Eſſay on Criticiſm were allowed, for ſome time, to contain this elegance in a high degree:

Soft

Soft is the ſtrain, when Zephyr gently blows,
And the ſmooth ſtreams in ſmoother numbers flows;
But when loud billows laſh the ſounding ſhore,
The hoarſe rough verſe ſhould, like the torrent, roar.
When Ajax ſtrives ſome rock's vaſt weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move ſlow:
Not ſo when ſwift Camilla ſcours the plain,
Flies o'er th'unbending corn, and ſkims along the main.

But the Rambler has endeavoured to overturn this opinion, and in the minds of ſome readers has ſucceeded in the attempt. "From theſe lines (ſays he) laboured with great attention, and celebrated by a rival wit, may be judged what can be expected from the moſt diligent endeavours after this imagery of ſound. The verſe intended to repreſent the whiſpering of the vernal breeze, muſt be confeſſed not much to excel in ſoftneſs or volubility; and the ſmooth ſtream runs with a perpetual claſhing of jarring conſonants.

The

The noiſe and turbulence of the torrent is, indeed, diſtinctly imaged, for it requires little ſkill to make our language rough: But in theſe lines which mention the effort of Ajax, there is no particular heavineſs, obſtruction, or delay. The ſwiftneſs of Camilla is rather contraſted than exemplified; why the verſe ſhould be lengthened to expreſs ſpeed, will not eaſily be diſcovered. In the dactyls uſed for that purpoſe by the ancients, two ſhort ſyllables were pronounced with ſuch rapidity as to be equal only to one long; they therefore naturally exhibit the act of paſſing through a long ſpace in a ſhort time: But the Alexandrine, by its pauſe in the midſt, is a tardy and ſtately meaſure; and the word *unbending*, one of the moſt ſluggiſh and ſlow which our language affords, cannot much accelerate its motion."

Homer's

Homer's poems would afford me innumerable inſtances of this poetic cadence; with what harſhneſs of numbers has he deſcribed the wind rending the ſails of a ſhip:

ἰσία δὲ σφιν
Τριχθα τε και τετραχθα διεσχισεν ις ανεμοιο*.

What ſoft and gentle harmony is there in the lines where he deſcribes the calm and perſuaſive eloquence of Neſtor:

Τοισι δε Νεστωρ
Ηδυεπης ανορουσε, λιγυς Πυλιων αγορητης,
Του και απο γλωσσης μελιτος γλυκιων ῥεεν αυδη†.

The ſwiftneſs of the following lines, ſays Rollin‖, may diſpute the rapidity of the horſe they deſcribe:

Οἷοι Τρωϊοι ἵπποι ἐπισάμενοι πεδίοιο
Καιπνὰ μαλ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα διωκέμεν ἠδὲ φεβέσθαι‡.

Xenophon, in deſcribing a battle, alſo adapts the words to the ſubject: The fol-

* Odyſ. ix. 7. † Il. i. 247.
‖ Belles Lettres, tome i. liv. 2. ‡ Il. v. 222.

lowing

lowing ſhort abrupt ſentences are very expreſſive of hurry and confuſion:

Εὐθὺς γὰρ ἀνεβόησάν τε παῖδες, καὶ προσπίσοντες ἐμάχοντο, ἐωθέν, ἐωθέντο, ἔπαιον, ἐπαίοντο. Καταπηδήσας δέ τις ἀπὸ τοῦ ἵππου τῶν τοῦ Κύρου ὑπηρετῶν, &c.*

What a horrible verſe Virgil gives us, when he deſcribes the monſtrous Polyphemus:

Monſtrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum.

Perſius alſo, as the abbé du Bos obſerves, has a verſe where he ſpeaks of a ſnuffler, that hardly can be pronounced without ſnuffling:

Rancidulum quiddam balba de nare locutus.
Sat. I.

The following lines in Boileau's Ode on the taking Namur, are adorned with this poetic beauty;

* Cyropædia, lib. vii. 488, 1727.

Sur

Sur les monceaux de piques,
De corps morts, de rocs, de briques,
S'ouvrir un large chemin.

" I do not recollect (ſays the above-mentioned ingenious author) more than one ſcrap of French poetry of this kind, that can be put in any ſort of competition with ſuch numbers of verſes which authors of all ages have commended in the works of thoſe poets who wrote when the Latin was a vulgar tongue; this is the deſcription of the above aſſault: The poet paints there, in mimic phraſes and elegant verſes, the ſoldier clambering up a breach ‖."

Mr. Maſon, in his Elfrida, has a line that finely deſcribes in the ſound a ſlow motion:

Move ſtreams ſlow-wand'ring thro' her winding vales *.

‖ Reflexions Critiques, tom. i. p. 35. * P. 19.

And

And Pope, in three lines which I do not remember to have ſeen quoted on the occaſion, adapts the cadence to the ſubject in a remarkable manner, particularly in the laſt:

Waller was ſmooth, but Dryden taught to join
The varying verſe, the full reſounding line,
The long majeſtic march, and energy divine †.

The difficulty of accommodating the ſound to the ſenſe, in the Engliſh language, is moſt when ſoftneſs ſhould be expreſſed. The word *ſlumb'rous* is one of the roughest in the language; what a ridiculous figure it makes, joined with the word *ſoft?*

Soft, ſlumb'rous, Lydian air, to ſooth his reſt *.

In Pope's Odyſſey alſo,

There ev'ry eye with ſlumb'rous chains ſhe bound †.

† Works, vol. iv. p. 135.
* Warton's Enthuſiaſt.
† Book ii. ver. 444.

In

In another place,

The downy fleece to form the ſlumb'rous bed ‡.

Such harſh ſounds to expreſs ſoftneſs, are intolerable.

There are ſeveral delicacies of verſification which ought always to be attended to: The natural roughneſs of the Engliſh language requires ſome pains to be taken to poliſh and ſoften it, eſpecially in poetry. Nothing has this effect ſo much as chuſing as many words as poſſible that abound in vowels:

Ye gentle gales, beneath my body blow,
And ſoftly lay me on the waves below.

The number of vowels in theſe two lines gives them a ſoftneſs, ſeldom met with in the language. Another point not leſs important, is to reject thoſe words

‡ Book iv. ver. 404.

which are rendered diſſonant by the letter S: There are ſcarce ten lines of our poetry that is non unmuſically hiſſing, occaſioned by this letter. The lines in which it does not appear are generally more muſical and clear than others. When it is joined with vowels, it is not ſo diſagreeable; but has a very rough effect with conſonants.

And ſcatters ſtorms and tempeſts as ſhe rides *.

How different when there is not one in a line:

And like a lambent flame around her play'd †.

What a fine flow of harmony is there in this paſſage in Mr. Gray's Ode:

Tho' he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban eagle bear,
Sailing with ſupreme dominion
Thro' the azure deep of air.

* Porſenna, by Dr. Liſle. Dodſley. † Ibid.

But

But there is only one S in the four lines, and that joined with three vowels.—Nothing occurs more often in the Engliſh poetry than the cæſura; it is ſometimes occaſioned by the *hiatus*, which is not half ſo diſagreeable: the verſification in the following lines is not without its merit, but one cæſura (to reduce a word to a ſingle ſyllable) ſpoils all its harmony:

and feel,
In the ſoft duties of a virtuous love,
Such pure, ſerene delight, as far tranſcends
What thou *ſtyl'ſt* pleaſure, the delirious joy
Of an intoxicated feveriſh brain *.

It would be endleſs to quote all the inſtances of this beauty of verſification, which even modern authors would afford: But the curious reader may find a few, which I have taken no notice of, in the 92d and 94th Ramblers; and a great

* Weſt's Inſtitution of the Garter. Dodſley.

many from ancient authors in Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus.

SECT. VII.

ONE of the moſt neceſſary diſquiſitions, in ſettling the diſtinct properties of the ſeveral ſpecies of the belles lettres, is an enquiry into the two grand vehicles of all modern poetry, blank verſe and rhyme. It is but an abſurd diſpute, which deſerves the preference; it might bear the appearance of a debate in the times of monkiſh ignorance and barbarity; but in an age which has the leaſt pretenſions to the title of polite and learned, ſuch a diſpute is a diſgrace. Whoſe numbers ſhall we prefer, the heavenly ſoarings, the divine harmony of a Milton, or the childiſh jingles of a Pope? The ancients, thoſe great maſters of compoſition,

ſition, knew nothing of rhyme; a ſtrong proof that it was invented in the obſcure ages, when all knowledge and literature centered among the monks: had it been more ancient, we ſhould have ſeen ſome remains of it among the Greeks and Latins. The meaſure of their poetry was no ſuch clog as rhyme; the noble poetic ſentiments of Homer, which burn throughout his poems with ſo bright a ſplendor, was aſſiſted, not cramped by his verſification: their meaſure gave a full flow to the fire of their poetry; and did not, like our rhyme, confine the fineſt expreſſions to the couplet. Some ſticklers for rhyme are ſo abſurd as to imagine that the heroic meaſure of the ancients was as much cramped as our rhyme, by the pauſes at the end of the lines; but of this the falſeneſs is at once perceived by turning to Homer or Virgil, whoſe lines

flow into the fineſt melody by means of their latitude of arrangement, and the uſe of long words *. But Dr. Young, ſpeaking

† Milton's advertiſement of the verſe, prefixed to his Paradiſe Loſt, is worth quoting here, as it is ſo much to my purpoſe: "The meaſure is Engliſh heroic verſe, without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and Virgil in Latin; rhyme being no neceſſary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verſe, in longer works eſpecially; but *the invention of a barbarous age* to ſet off wretched matter and lame metre: graced indeed ſince by the uſe of ſome famous modern poets, carried away by cuſtom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and conſtraint, to expreſs many things otherwiſe (and for the moſt part worſe) than elſe they would have expreſſed them. Not without cauſe therefore, ſome (both Italian and Spaniſh) poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and ſhorter works; as have alſo long ſince our beſt Engliſh tragedies; as a thing of itſelf to all judicious ears trivial and of no true muſical delight: which conſiſts only in apt numbers, fit quantity of ſyllables, and the ſenſe variouſly drawn out from one verſe into another: not in the jingling ſound of like endings; a fault avoided by the learned ancients, both

ſpeaking of Pope's tranſlation of Homer, ſets the analogy of blank verſe and the ancient heroic meaſure in a juſt light.

"What a fall is it from Homer's numbers, free as air, lofty and harmonious as the ſpheres, into childiſh ſhackles and tinkling ſounds! But, in his fall, he is ſtill great —

Nor appears
Leſs than archangel ruin'd, and the exceſs
Of glory obſcur'd.

Had Milton never wrote, Pope had been leſs to blame; but in Milton's genius, Homer as it were perſonally roſe to forbid Britons doing him that ignoble wrong;

both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rhyme ſo little is to be taken for a defect (though it may ſeem ſo perhaps to vulgar readers), that it rather is to be eſteemed an example ſet (the firſt in Engliſh) of *antient liberty* recovered to heroic poem, from the troubleſome and modern bondage of rhyming.

it is leſs pardonable, by that effeminate decoration, to put Achilles in petticoats a ſecond time: how much nobler had it been, if his numbers had rolled on in full flow, through the various modulations of maſculine melody, into thoſe grandeurs of ſolemn ſound, which are indiſpenſably demanded by the native dignity of heroic ſong. How much nobler, if he had reſiſted the temptation of that Gothic demon, which modern poeſy taſting, became mortal. O how unlike the deathleſs divine harmony of three great names (how juſtly joined!) Milton, Greece, and Rome? His verſe, but for this little ſpeck of mortality in its extreme parts, as his hero had in his heel, like him had been invulnerable and immortal. But, unfortunately, that was undipped in Helicon, as this in Styx. Harmony as well as eloquence is eſſential

to

to poeſy; and a murder of his muſic, is putting half Homer to death. Blank is a term of dimunition; what we mean by blank verſe, is verſe unfallen, uncurſt; verſe reclaimed, reinthroned in the true language of the gods, who never thundered, nor ſuffered their Homer to thunder, in rhyme; and therefore, I beg you, my friend, to crown it with ſome nobler term, nor let the greatneſs of the thing lie under the defamation of ſuch a name*."

Whatever is a cramp upon the poet, without yielding great beauties, ought to be rejected. Now rhyme throws ſuch a perpetual ſameneſs and monotony, in long works, over the whole, that the poetic fire muſt neceſſarily be half extinguiſhed; for how can ſublime images and lofty conceptions be expreſſed through

* Conjectures on original Compoſition, p. 14.

any

any extent of lines pent up in the ſhackle of the couplet? What a figure would the ſixth book of the Paradiſe Loſt have made in rhyme! blank verſe, by giving an opportunity to the poet to expreſs his ſentiments in a full flow of expreſſive and melodious verſification, pours forth all the fire of imagination in an unbounded ſtream.

Of this we have a fine example in the following paſſage, in which the poet ſets out with almoſt a proſaic weakneſs of verſe; thence riſing gradually, like the ſwell of an organ, he ſoars into the higheſt dignity of ſound*:

Th' infernal ſerpent; he it was, whoſe guile,
Stir'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had caſt him out from heav'n, with all his hoſt
Of rebel angels, by whoſe aid aſpiring

* Webb's Remarks, p. 61.

To

To ſet himſelf in glory above his peers,
He truſted to have equalled the Moſt High,
If he oppos'd? and with ambitious aim
Againſt the throne and Monarchy of God
Rais'd impious war in heav'n and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the almighty power
Hurl'd headlong flaming || from th'ethereal ſky,
With hideous ruin and combuſtion || down
To bottomleſs perdition, || there to dwell
In adamantine chains, and penal fire,
Who durſt defy th'omnipotent to arms.

It is obvious from what I have already ſaid of it, that the couplet is not formed for ſuch gradations as theſe. On the contrary, from the ſameneſs in its flow, every ſentiment, of what nature ſoever, comes equally recommended to the ear, and of courſe to our attention. That melodious pomp of ſound, ſo ſtriking in the paſſage I juſt quoted, reſults merely from the flow of one verſe into another, and the variety of pauſes which reſt almoſt in every line on a different ſyllable; how different is rhyme:

Lo, the poor Indian! whoſe untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind,‖
His ſoul proud ſcience never taught to ſtray
Far as the ſolar walk, or milky way;‖
Yet ſimple nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n,‖
Some ſafer world, in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier iſland in the watry waſte,‖
Where ſlaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no chriſtians thirſt for gold;‖
To be content's his natural deſire,
He aſks no angel's wing, no ſeraph's fire,‖
But thinks, admitted to that equal ſky,
His faithful dog ſhall bear him company.‖

I have quoted one of the fineſt paſſages in all Mr. Pope's poems, not only for the thought, but the harmony of the lines, as far as rhyme will admit: The harmony in Milton roſe gradually, and concluded in the laſt ſix lines, which all run into each other with the utmoſt melody and dignity of ſound: In this, the pauſe, as it ever muſt, reſts at the end of each couplet; and what harmony the

lines

lines contain, is ſtruck into almoſt diſtinct parts by each couplet, beſides the ſeveral half pauſes which reſt almoſt regularly at the fourth or the ſixth ſyllable, the melody muſt of courſe, in this one paſſage, be broken and ſeparated into parts, inſtead of running into that fine eaſy flow of harmony which rhyme ever mangles. But let me quote another very celebrated paſſage from his Rape of the Lock, in which his verſification ſhines the brighteſt of all his poems:

On her white breaſt || a ſparkling croſs ſhe wore,
Which Jews might kiſs || and infidels adore. ||
Her lively looks || a ſprightly mind diſcloſe,
Quick as her eyes, || and as unfix'd as thoſe: ||
Favours to none, || to all ſhe ſmiles extends,
Oft ſhe rejects, || but never once offends. ||
Bright as the ſun, || her eyes the gazers ſtrike;
And, like the ſun, they ſhine on all alike. ||
Yet graceful eaſe, || and ſweetneſs void of pride,
Might hide her faults, || if belles had faults to hide. ||
If to her ſhare || ſome female errors fall,
Look on her face, || and you'll forget them all. ||

In

In theſe twelve lines, and indeed through half his works, is the repeated tireſome pauſe at the end of the fourth ſyllable, which throws ſuch a tedious monotony through them as to deſtroy every ſpark of the true poetic fire.

" With reſpect to the form of blank verſe (ſays lord Kaimes) it differs not from rhyme farther than rejecting the ſimilar ſounds. But let us not think this difference a trifle, or that we gain nothing by it but the purifying our verſe from a pleaſure ſo childiſh. In truth, our verſe is extremely cramped by rhyme; and the great advantage of blank verſe, is, that being free from the fetters of rhyme, it is at liberty to attend the imagination in its boldeſt flights. Rhyme neceſſarily divides verſe into couplets; each couplet makes a complete muſical period,

period, the parts of which are divided by pauſes, and the whole ſummed up by a full cloſe at the end: The modulation begins anew with the next couplet; and in this manner a compoſition in rhyme proceeds couplet after couplet. I have more than once had occaſion to obſerve the influence that ſound and ſenſe have upon each other by their intimate union. If a couplet be a complete period with regard to the melody, it ought regularly to be ſo alſo with regard to the ſenſe. This, it is true, proves too great a cramp upon compoſition; and licences are indulged, as explained above. Theſe, however, muſt be uſed with diſcretion, ſo as to preſerve ſome degree of uniformity betwixt the ſenſe and the muſic. There ought never to be a full cloſe in the ſenſe but at the end of a couplet; and there ought always to be ſome pauſe

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in the ſenſe at the end of every couplet. The ſame period, as to ſenſe, may be extended through ſeveral couplets; but in this caſe each couplet ought to contain a diſtinct member, diſtinguiſhed by a pauſe in the ſenſe as well as in the ſound; and the whole ought to be cloſed with a complete cadence. Rules ſuch as theſe muſt confine rhyme within very narrow bounds. A thought of any extent cannot be reduced within its compaſs: The ſenſe muſt be curtailed and broken into pieces, to make it ſquare with the curneſs of melody; and it is obvious, that ſhort periods afford no latitude for invention. I have examined this point with the greater accuracy, in order to give a juſter notion of blank verſe; and to ſhew, that a ſlight difference in form, may produce a very great difference in ſubſtance. Blank verſe has

the ſame pauſes and accents with rhyme; and a pauſe at the end of every line like what concludes the firſt line of a couplet. In a word, the rules of melody in blank verſe are the ſame that obtain with reſpect to the firſt line of a couplet; but, luckily, being diſengaged from rhyme, or, in other words, from couplets, there is acceſs to make every line run into another, preciſely as the firſt line of a couplet may run into the ſecond. There muſt be a muſical pauſe at the end of every line; but it is not neceſſary that it be accompanied with a pauſe in the ſenſe. The ſenſe may be carried on through different lines, till a period of the utmoſt extent be completed by a full cloſe both in the ſenſe and ſound. There is no reſtraint, other than that this full cloſe be at the end of a line. This reſtraint is neceſſary, in order to preſerve a coinci-

dence betwixt ſenſe and ſound; which ought to be aimed at in general, and is indiſpenſable in the caſe of a full cloſe, becauſe it has a ſtriking effect. Hence the aptitude of blank verſe for inverſion, and conſequently the luſtre of its pauſes and accents; for which, as obſerved above, there is greater ſcope in inverſion than when words run in their natural order.

"Nothing contributes more than inverſion to the force and elevation of language. The couplets of rhyme confine inverſion within narrow limits; nor would the elevation of inverſion, were there acceſs for it in rhyme, be extremely concordant with the humbler tone of that ſort of verſe. It is univerſally agreed, that the loftineſs of Milton's ſtyle ſupports admirably the ſublimity of his ſubject;

ject; and it is no leſs certain that the loftineſs of his ſtyle ariſes chiefly from inverſion. Shakeſpear deals little in inverſion; but his blank verſe, being a ſort of meaſured proſe, is perfectly well adapted to the ſtage: Laboured inverſion is there extremely improper, becauſe in dialogue it can never appear natural.

"Hitherto I have conſidered the advantage of laying aſide rhyme, with reſpect to that ſuperior power of expreſſion which verſe acquires thereby. But this is not the only advantage of blank verſe; it has another, not leſs ſignal of its kind, and that is, of a more extenſive and more complete melody. Its muſic is not, like that of the rhyme, confined to a ſingle couplet; but takes in a great compaſs, ſo as in ſome meaſure to rival muſic properly ſo called. The intervals betwixt its

cadences may be long or ſhort at pleaſure; and by this means its modulation, with reſpect both to richneſs and variety, is ſuperior far to that of rhyme, and ſuperior even to that of the Greek and Latin hexameter. Of this obſervation no perſon can doubt, who is acquainted with the Paradiſe Loſt. In that work there are indeed many careleſs lines, but at every turn it ſhines out in the richeſt melody, as well as in the ſublimeſt ſentiments: Take the following ſpecimen:

Now morn her roſy ſteps in th'eaſtern clime
Advancing, ſow'd the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam wak'd; ſo cuſtom'd, for his ſleep
Was aëry light, from pure digeſtion bred,
And temp'rate vapours bland, which th'only ſound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly diſpers'd, and the ſhrill matin-ſong
Of birds on ev'ry bough; ſo much the more
His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve,
With treſſes diſcompos'd and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet reſt: He, on his ſide

Leaning

Leaning half-rais'd, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
Beauty, which, whether waking or aſleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice
Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand ſoft touching, whiſper'd thus: Awake,
My faireſt, my eſpous'd, my lateſt found,
Heav'n's laſt beſt gift, my ever-new delight,
Awake; the morning ſhines, and the freſh field
Calls us; we loſe the prime, to mark how ſpring
Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
How nature paints her colours, how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid ſweet *.

The French poetry (very little excepted) is all in rhyme; it is worth remarking how poor and tame their poets in general are; and let me add, owing ſolely to their language, as admirable for light ſubjects, as it is unequal to ſuperior ones: So wretchedly unequal is it to true poetry, that even their moſt admired tragedies are in rhyme, nor can their boldeſt poets throw off this deſperate ſhackle;

* Elements of Criticiſm, vol. ii. p. 457.

the language requires the jingle, to be thrown off from proſe; and rather than write tragedies in proſe, all their poets are guilty of the greateſt and moſt glaring abſurdities: In thoſe ſituations where the ſudden ſtarts of paſſion lay open the very inmoſt ſoul, all muſt be expreſſed in rhyme; heroes, lovers, and aſſaſſins muſt all rhyme out their dying groans. The leaſt poetic language in Europe is neceſſitated to uſe rhyme; ſhall we, therefore, whoſe language is lofty, ſonorous, and expreſſive, and which flows almoſt naturally into blank verſe, ſhall we adopt and even admire the monkiſh, childiſh fetters of rhyme? —Many are the beauties which are ruined by the uſe of it; I know none it occaſions; there is no real beauty in the ſimilitude of ſound at the concluſion of two lines; in ſome rich rhymes there is an appearance of it, but

even

even theſe repeated, become tireſome to the ear; what therefore muſt a whole epic poem of above ten thouſand verſes be?

There is no rule in poetry, whoſe obſervance coſts ſo much trouble, and produces ſo few beauties in verſe, as that of rhyming. Rhyme frequently maims, and almoſt always enervates the ſenſe of the diſcourſe. For one bright thought which the paſſion of rhyming throws in our way by chance, it is certainly every day the cauſe of an hundred others, which people would bluſh to make uſe of, were it not for the richneſs or novelty of rhyme with which theſe thoughts are attended.

And yet the allurement of rhyme has nothing in it worth comparing to the charms of numbers and harmony. The

terminating a ſyllable with a particular ſound, is no beauty of itſelf. The beauty of rhyme is only a relative one, which conſiſts in a conformity of the termination between the laſt words of two correſponding verſes. This ornament therefore, which is of ſo ſhort a duration, is perceived only at the end of two verſes, and after having heard the laſt word of the ſ cond verſe, which rhymes to the firſt. One is not even ſenſible of this pleaſure but at the end of three or four verſes, if the maſculine and feminine verſes are interwoven, ſo that the firſt and fourth be maſculines, and the ſecond and third feminines; a mixture which is very much uſed in ſeveral kinds of poetry.

But to confine our diſcourſe to thoſe verſes in which rhyme ſhines forth in all its luſtre and beauty, the richneſs thereof diſcovers

diſcovers itſelf only at the end of the ſecond verſe. It is the greater or leſſer conformity of ſounds between the two laſt words of the two verſes which form its elegance, Now the moſt part of them who are not themſelves of the profeſſion, or, though of the profeſſion, are not particularly fond of rhyme, do not, upon hearing the ſecond rhyme, recollect the firſt diſtinctly enough to be charmed with their perfection. Their merit is known rather by reflection than ſenſation, ſo trifling is the pleaſure by which it tickles the ear.

Some perhaps will ſay, that there muſt certainly be a much greater beauty in rhyme than I pretend to allow: The conſent of all nations (they will add) is a ſenſible proof in favour of rhyme, the uſe of which is at preſent favourably adopted.

My

My anſwer is, in the firſt place, that I do not conteſt the agreeableneſs of rhyme; I only look upon this agreeableneſs in a much inferior light to that which ariſes from the numbers and harmony of verſe, and which ſhews itſelf continually during the metrical pronunciation. Numbers and harmony are a light which throws out a conſtant luſtre; but rhyme is a mere flaſh, which diſappears after having given only a ſhort-lived ſplendor. In fact, the richeſt rhyme has but a very tranſient effect. Were we even to raiſe the value of verſes only by the difficulties that are to be ſurmounted in making them, it is leſs difficult, without compariſon, to rhyme completely, than to compoſe numerous and harmonious verſes*.

I am

* La neceſſité de rimer eſt la regle de la poëſie dont l'obſervation coûte le plus & jette le moins de beautés dans les vers. La rime eſtropie ſouvent le ſens du diſcours, & elle l'énerve preſque tou-

I am an advocate for blank verſe only in poems of length or dignity, ſuch as the

toujours. Pour une penſée heureuſe que l'ardeur de rimer richement peut faire rencontrer par hazard, elle fait certainement employer tous les jours cent autres penſées dont on auroit dédaigné de ſe ſervir ſans la richeſſe ou la nouveauté de la rime que ces penſées amenent.

Cependant l'agrément de la rime n'eſt point à comparer avec l'agrément du nombre & de l'harmonie. Une ſyllabe terminée par un certain ſon n'eſt point une beauté par elle même. Auſſi la beauté de la rime n'eſt-elle qu'une beauté de rapport qui conſiſte en une conformité de *déſinance* entre le dernier mot d'un vers, & le dernier mot du vers réciproque. On n'entrevoit donc cette beauté qui paſſe ſi vîte qu'au bout de deux vers après avoir entendu le dernier mot du ſecond vers qui rime au premier. On ne ſent pas même l'agrément de la rime qu'au bout de trois & de quatre vers, lorſque les rimes maſculines & feminines ſont entrelacées de maniere que la prémiere & la quatriéme ſoient maſculines, & la ſeconde & la troiſiéme feminines ; mélange qui eſt fort en uſage dans pluſieurs eſpeces de poëſie.

Mais pour ne parler ici que des vers où la rime paroit dans tout ſon éclat & dans toute ſa beauté,

the epic, tragic, or thoſe of a miſcellaneous nature, when their ſubjects are important,

té, on n'y ſent richeſſe qu'au bout du ſecond vers. C'eſt la conformité de ſon plus ou moins parfaite entre les derniers mots des deux vers qui fait ſon élégance. Or la plûpart des auditeurs qui ne ſont pas du métier, ou qui ne ſont point amoureux de la rime bien qu'ils ſoient du métier, ne ſe ſouviennent plus de la premiere rime, lorſqu'ils entendent la ſeconde aſſez diſtinctement pour être bien flattés de la perfection de ces rimes. C'eſt plutôt par réflexion que par ſentiment qu'on en connoît le merite, tant le plaiſir qu'elle fait à l'oreille eſt un plaiſir mince.

On me dira qu'il faut qu'il ſe trouve dans la rime une beauté bien ſuperieure à celle que je lui accorde. L'agrément de la rime, ajoutera-t-on, s'eſt fait ſentir à toutes les nations. Elles ont toutes des vers rimés.

En premier lieu, je ne diſconviens pas de l'agrément de la rime ; mais je tiens cet agrément fort au-deſſous de celui nait du rithme & de l'harmonie du vers, & qui ſe fait ſentir continuellement durant la prononciation du vers métrique. Le rithme & l'harmonie ſont une lumiere qui luit toujours, & la rime n'eſt qu'un éclair qui diſparoît après avoir jetté quelque lueur. En effet la rime la plus

important, and give a ſcope to the true poetic fire. Dr. Akenſide rightly judged when he compoſed his Pleaſures of Imagination, to write it in blank verſe; ſuch a noble ſubject cramped up in rhyme would loſe half that enthuſiaſm of poetry, which gives it its brighteſt luſtre. It is abſolutely impoſſible for a noble ſubject of any length to be wrote in rhyme, and to loſe none of its dignity and merit on that account: It muſt flag, and that ſtream of divine fire which blazes out in Homer and Milton, would be reduced to ſhort flaſhes, and a faint glimmering of ſmoak and flame.

plus riche ne fait qu'un effet bien paſſager. A n'eſtimer même la mérite des vers que par les difficultés qu'il faut ſurmonter pour les faire; il eſt moins difficile ſans comparaiſon de rimer richement que de compoſer des vers nombreux & remplis d'harmonie.

Réflexions Critiques, tome i. p. 189.

It is ſcarce neceſſary to reaſon upon a caſe that never did, and probably never will happen, viz. an important ſubject cloathed in rhyme, and yet ſupported in its utmoſt elevation. A happy thought or warm expreſſion, may at times give a ſudden bound upward; but it requires a genius greater than has hitherto exiſted, to ſupport a poem of any length in a tone much more elevated than that of the melody. Taſſo and Arioſto ought not to be made exceptions, and ſtill leſs Voltaire; and after all, where the poet has the dead weight of rhyme conſtantly to ſtruggle with, how can we expect an uniform elevation in a pitch, when ſuch elevation, with all the ſupport it can receive from language, requires the utmoſt effort of the human genius *?

* Elements of criticiſm, vol. ii. p. 453.

Rhyme

Rhyme is even more tolerable in epic poems than in tragedies. The cuſtom of concluding acts with rhymes, is a remain of antient barbarity; but the pieces of Dryden particularly, which are throughout fringed with it, are wretched; and the tragedies of the French, and a few of our own, which are all in rhyme, are moſt barbarous compoſitions, and diſgrace the theatre. Rhyme is only proper for very light ſubjects; if good, it gives a value to a ſong or epigram: I ſhould hate to ſee a little humourous Poem on a trivial ſubject, dreſſed out in blank verſe: it would be as abſurd as the Eſſay on Man is in rhyme *.

In

* Rhyme is not leſs unfit for deep diſtreſs, than for ſubjects elevated and lofty; and for that reaſon has been long diſuſed in the Engliſh and Italian tragedy. In a work where the ſubject is ſerious, though not elevated, it has not a good effect; becauſe the airineſs of the modulation agrees not with the gravity of the ſubject. The Eſſay on Man,

In a word it is amazing that men of taſte who value ſentiment more than words

Man, which treats a ſubject great and important, would ſhow much better in blank verſe. Sportive love, mirth, gaiety, humour, and ridicule, are the province of the rhyme. The boundaries aſſigned it by nature were extended in barbarous and illiterate ages, and in its uſurpations it has long been protected by cuſtom. But taſte in the fine arts, as well as in morals, improves daily; and makes a progreſs, ſlowly indeed, but uniformly, towards perfection: and there is no reaſon to doubt, that rhyme, in Britain, will in time be forced to abandon its unjuſt conqueſts, and to confine itſelf within its narrow limits. Rhyme having no relation to ſentiment, nor any effect upon the ear other than a mere jingle, ought to be baniſhed all compoſitions of any dignity, as affording but a trifling and childiſh pleaſure. It will alſo be obſerved, that a jingle of words hath in ſome meaſure a ludicrous effect: witneſs the celebrated Poem of Hudibras, the double rhymes of which contribute no ſmall ſhare to its drollery; that this effect would be equally remarkable in a ſerious work, were it not obſcured by the nature of the ſubject; that having however a conſtant tendency to give a ludicrous air to the compoſition, it

words, who had rather meet with one grand and lofty thought than twenty harmonious verſes, ſhould be able to reliſh rhymes in poems of a ſuperior order. So trivial a beauty as rich rhyme can give no luſtre to a great thought; but, on the contrary, cramps the expreſſion of it ſo far as to ruin its appearance; whereas a ſublime and harmonious compoſition in blank verſe enables the poet to ſwell out the whole thought into proper expreſſions, and the conception receives new beauty from the grandeur of its cloathing. The author of the Preſent State of Polite Learning in Europe aſſerts, in his uſual ſuperficial manner, that blank verſe is unharmonious; a proof of his acquaintance with our greateſt poets! and adds,

it requires more than ordinary fire to ſupport the dignity of the ſentiments againſt ſuch an undetermining antagoniſt.

Elements of Criticiſm, vol. ii. p. 448.

" If rhymes, therefore, be more difficult *, for that reaſon I would have our poets write in rhyme. Such a reſtriction upon the thought of a good poet, often lifts and increaſes the vehemence of every ſentiment; for fancy, like a fountain, plays higheſt by diminiſhing the aperture †." Let the author produce me the paſſages in our poets, in which the vehemence of ſentiment is increaſed by the rhymes; the aſſertion falls to the

* How different is abbé du Bos' opinion? " Peut on (ſays he) d'ailleurs ne point regarder le travail bizarre de rimes comme la plus baſſe des fonctions de la méchanique de la poëſie?"

Réflexions Critiques, tome i. p. 188.

† Page 151.—1759. A very ſuperficial work, which gives no information on the ſubject, and employs more pages in railing at the managers of our theatres than in ſumming up the merit of the principal authors in Europe, not a tenth part of which are ever once mentioned. I ſuppoſe the author was unſucceſsful in his application to Mr. Garrick.

ground,

ground, without a ſingle inſtance. But this I know, that for one noble and beautiful paſſage in rhyme, I will produce ten in blank verſe that exceed it; and if the reader does not think the lines I have quoted a ſufficient proof of this, let him turn to Mr. Webb's admirable treatiſe on the Beauties of Poetry, a criticiſm not wrote in a ſuperficial frothy manner, but with the penetration and elegance of a Longinus; and he will there meet with very convincing arguments in favour of blank verſe *.

Of

* I know a very ſenſible man, who is yet ſo prejudiced in favour of rhyme, as to defend the uſe of it in all ſubjects. Two of his arguments are extremely weak. He ſays blank verſe is no poetry, for with a pair of compaſſes he could meaſure out the General Dictionary into blank verſe; whereas rhyme in all ſubjects throws the language off from proſe. His ſecond argument is, that rhyme is much eaſier carried in the memory, and of courſe more uſeful. As to the firſt, the eaſineſs of bad

Of the ſame nature with the diſpute concerning blank verſe and rhyme, is that diſcuſſion about which the critics

blank verſe is allowed; but good is more ſcarce than good rhyme; for there are many worthy poets in their garrets at London, who will preſently ſpin a hundred thouſand rhymes, and no bad ones neither, and in the whole there ſhall be as little *poetry* as in my friend's General Dictionary transformed into blank verſe. But bad rhyming poetry is much more common than bad blank verſe; for the worſt poets think there is ſome merit even in their rhymes, and ſo peſter the public with ſtuff, that have nothing elſe to recommend them: any man may rhyme eaſier than compoſe harmonious blank verſe.

As to the ſecond point, it is very trivial indeed, and proves nothing in proving too much; for if the eaſineſs of remembring is the merit of poetry, a wretched ſong is of more value than the fineſt paſſage in the Paradiſe Loſt. Let the inſtructions for children be wrote in rhyme, but give me the poet,

meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falſis terroribus implet,
Ut magus; & modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.

Which will never be in rhyme.

have

have puzzled themſelves ſo much; whether verſification is neceſſary to poetry? a point long debated, but never perfectly ſettled. The publication of ſome remarkable pieces lately, ſuch as Fingal, Temora, and the Death of Abel, have in ſome meaſure revived the arguments formerly uſed, and will juſtify my ſpending a few pages about it here.

On the firſt conſideration it ſeems evident, that the true and diſtinguiſhing property, or, in other words, the grand excellency of poetry, lies in the thoughts, which are always higher rated than the expreſſion; and it is very certain that the nobleſt conceptions of the mind may be expreſſed in proſe. This is the argument uſed by one party; but if we conſider what a levelling doctrine it is, we ſhall perceive that there would be no idea an-

nexed juſtly to any term, unleſs we allow certain diſtinguiſhing bounds to part and ſeparate the ſeveral ſpecies of all ſorts of effects. That there is ſuch a thing as poetry is moſt certain; and there muſt be ſome eſſential properties to conſtitute a poem: But if we give that title to any work in proſe, there is no end of ſuch confuſion of terms, and poetry and proſe may from that time be regarded as the ſame ſpecies of compoſition, than which there cannot be a more abſurd concluſion.

In reading proſe, we now and then meet with a noble thought well expreſſed; we naturally and juſtly ſay *it is poetic:* There we ſhould reſt; we may aſſert a piece of proſe is poetic, or ſomething like poetry; but we ought not therefore to dignify it at once with the title of poem. A print repreſents the idea of the maſter from

from whoſe work it is taken, and diſplays his invention in the ſubject, and his manner of treating it; why may we not therefore aſſert that a print is a picture *? Becauſe colours are wanting; in the

* In order to explain this reply, let it be obſerved, that all the fine arts have ſomething in common, and ſomething particular to each, that conſtitutes its proper and diſtinguiſhing character. For inſtance, the painter and the poet muſt be able to compoſe a beautiful whole of the different parts of nature they ſtudy and copy, which often does not exiſt but in their own imagination.

Poeta, tabulas cum cepit ſibi,
Quærit quod nuſquam eſt gentium, reperit tamen.
Plaut. Pſeud. Act. I. Sc. 4.

Both muſt *deſign*, each in his own manner, what they have invented; mark and diſtribute all the parts, and all their bearings, relations, and dependencies: But when all this is done, if the painter ſhould not add colours, and if the poet ſhould not add verſification; neither hath the one made a picture, nor the other a poem: for as colours are eſſential to a picture, ſo is verſification to poetry.

the ſame manner verſification is neceſſary to a poem.

Throughout the vaſt field of human ſcience, in the partition of the ingenious arts, each has its boundaries. The intelligence which animates them all, and gives them fecundity, preſides over their ſeveral productions; *Spiritus intus alit.* The ſame ſpirit watches likewiſe over the preſervation of the limits which ſeparate

It will be ſaid, is not a poem transformed into proſe, a poem ſtill? Who will ſay it is not? Do not the plan, the ordonnance, the thoughts, the ſentiments, the deſcriptions ſtill ſubſiſt; all, in a word, one can deſire to know and underſtand from the original. I dare adventure to aſk in my turn, if a print engraved after a picture, is a picture? If they agree it is not, I am ready, in favour of ſo beautiful and uſeful an art, to let paſs, without further diſpute, the whole compariſon between a print in reſpect of a picture, and a proſe tranſlation in reſpect to the original in verſe.

them;

them; none of them can be diſlodged out of its proper place, without being culpable in his eyes: It is to diſturb the order it has eſtabliſhed, it is to create diſorder and confuſion, where harmony and tranquillity ought to reign.

If certain wits, who confound poetry with proſe, had well conſidered the nature and conſequences of their enterprize, they would have contented themſelves with excelling in either, without removing the unalterable boundaries by which they are eſſentially ſeparated. But let us ſearch into the origin of ſuch an innovation.

The poet, whoſe art conſiſts wholly in imitation and painting, will find, ſay they, in proſe, and there more abundantly than in verſe, all that is neceſſary for painting

painting and imitation. Wherefore, without ſubjecting the liberty of his genius to the conſtraints and fetters of verſe, which always too ſtraitly confine the imagination, he will attain to the end of his art; and his compoſitions, though in proſe, will notwithſtanding be in reality excellent poems.

In anſwer to this reaſoning, I ſay that a poet is not naturally an imitator only, ſince he hath the free choice of the means he employs in imitating: But that he is tied down to verſe in his imitations.

The painter, the muſician, and the poet, have equally for their end and object imitation: The muſician imitates by ſounds, the painter by colours, and the poet by choſen words; the different union of which, within the bounds of an

an unvaried meaſure, produce an infinitely diverſified harmony. This is what is called verſe: And becauſe by the aid of this harmony, the poet, more hardy than either the muſician or the painter, makes images paſs which are far more lively and grand than any proſe can admit, and thus gives an original air to his copy; his imitation is termed in one word *poem*, *i. e.* work; and he himſelf, the author of ſuch a wonderful imitation is denominated, by way of eminence, *the worker*, ποιητης. Hence the authority of the firſt poets over the human mind.

Sylveſtres homines ſacer interpreſque deorum
Cædibus & fœdo victu deterruit Orpheus.
Hor. Art. Poet.

For moſt aſſuredly it was not by odes in proſe that Orpheus tamed lions and tygers,

Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres rabidoſque leones.

Nor

Nor that Amphion raiſed the walls of Thebes,

Dictus & Amphion, Thebanæ conditor arcis,
Saxa movere ſono teſtudinis, & prece blanda
Ducere quo vellet.

It was by the magical power of fine verſe*, that both getting faſt hold of the human heart, led men to virtue; inſomuch that the glorious name of poet being due to the admiration with which men were ſtruck by their verſe, it could never after be acquired or preſerved but by means of the ſame enchanting verſification which gave birth to it.

The poet then has meaſures and numbers for every kind of imitation.

Res geſtæ regumque ducumque, & triſtia bella,
Quo ſcribi poſſint numero monſtravit Homerus.
Verſibus impariter junctis querimonia primum,
Poſt etiam incluſa eſt voti ſententia compos.

* Canto quæ ſolitus—Amphion Dircæus.
Virg. Ec. ii.

It

It may always be aſked, whether proſe is not ſuſceptible of cadence and harmony? It is undoubtedly. Nor can any thing be more evident from numberleſs compoſitions both antient and modern; yet a multitude of objections ſtill remain againſt confounding them both; for as there is a certain and univerſally allowed difference between poetry and proſe, we cannot fix the boundaries any where ſo well as in verſification. And indeed no writer, as a French author juſtly obſerves, ever aſſumed the name of a poet, when he did not compoſe in verſe. Neither Apuleius nor Lucian are ranked in that claſs: Yet the Metamorphoſes of the former is a very poetical work; and the Hiſtory of Pſyche would be a poem, were it not in proſe. The ſtile of Apuleius is florid enough to merit the new name of poetical-proſe: The viſions of Lucian in

in his True Hiſtory, are of the ſame kind: His ſtile is gay and flowery, being decked with the flowers only to be gathered in the garden of the Muſes: But neither of them is claſſed with the poets. And why? Becauſe neither of them wrote in verſe. I might ſay the ſame of Scipio's Dream: the beauty, the ſublimity of which compoſition would have merited Cicero the firſt rank among the poets, if proſe could have gained that prize *.

I cannot believe that the illuſtrious author of Telemachus ever thought his work a poem; he was too well acquainted with every ſpecies of the belles lettres, not to pay a proper regard to thoſe invariable limits which ought never to be

* See the Memoires de Literature tiré des Regiſtre de l'Academie Royale des Inſcriptions & Belles Lettres, tome xiii. p. 310.

deſtroyed.

deſtroyed. He never meant that his agreeable romance ſhould be an example for other compoſers, to aſſume the title of poets from works compoſed in proſe. Such effects would bring the European poetry to the ſame claſs as that of eaſtern nations, who never produced true poems: Nine out of ten of their poems are nothing but ſtrings of monſtrous and extravagant metaphors, and hyperboles, and affected enigmatical epithets cloathed in high-ſounding proſe.

In fine, if one could merit the name of poet by writing in proſe, every one would aſpire at the character: A high-ſwoln ſtile would hold the rank of the true ſublime; an arbitrary diſpoſition of phraſes and periods would hold the rank of harmony; and beſides, the ideas called poetical being trite, and within the reach

reach of every one, every new day would bring forth ſome new monſter called a poem. Fine poets, diſguſted to ſee their laurels thus proſtituted to every trifler, would abandon an art from which formerly they derived real honour; and ranking this pretended poetry with the loweſt arts, they will ſay with indignation,

Frange leves calamos, & ſcinde, Thalia, libellos;
Si dare ſutori calceus iſta poteſt *.

Such pretenſions are unjuſt, and as much as we may admire the beautiful painting of a Fenelon, or the ſublime ſtrokes of an Oſſian, yet we ſhould have a greater regard to propriety than to rank them immediately as poems. There are beauties peculiar to proſe, and it requires a vaſt ſhare of natural genius, and acquired elegance, to compoſe that which

* Mart. lib. ix. Ep. 75.

is perfectly beautiful: There is more ſentiment in Mr. Addiſon's proſe than in half our poems; why therefore ſhould proſe, which hath its own ſpecial beauty, go about to beg a foreign one? and, above all, let it not flatter itſelf with the hopes of ever equalling poetry by the aid of borrowed embelliſhments.

Let us call to mind the pleaſure good verſes afford us, when the truth and beauty of ſentiments are ſupported, nay enhanced, by the charms of numbers and harmony, take powerful hold of our ſoul, and entirely poſſeſs it*. When the enthuſiaſm of a poet ſeizes the actor, and paſſes from him to the hearer; if ſo much as one word is diſplaced, if but one ſyllable is out of order, if the harmony be broken in the ſmalleſt degree by negli-

* Memoires de Litt.

gent pronunciation, all our pleaſure vaniſhes. What muſt be the caſe, if the verſe is wholly deſtroyed and reduced to mere proſe? Nothing would remain but, at moſt, what Horace calls *Disjecti membra poetæ*, the ſhattered members of a disjointed poet, which can no more make a poem than ſevered ſcattered limbs a body.

It may be aſked, what is the firſt and eſſential property of good poetry, ſuppoſing that all poems muſt have verſification, but that there may be many verſified pieces without being really poetry? A queſtion not to be anſwered at once; for, like many other critical points, it has given riſe to more opinions than one. It has been aſſerted, that there can be no poem without fiction; than which there cannot be a falſer aſſertion: But here ſome

pains

pains are neceſſary to combat an opinion which is ſupported by ſeveral learned men, for whom I have a very high regard, though their arguments on this ſubject do not convince me. They imagining fable to be inſeparable from poetry, place thoſe whoſe works are not animated by the preſence of ſome feigned perſonage, or ſome allegorical divinity, amongſt the verſifiers only. A poet, ſay they, ought alwas to *create*; the name ſignifies a *creator*; and therefore, to anſwer their profeſſion, and to create, they ought to leave precepts to philoſophers and facts to hiſtorians, and to invent ſome agreeable lie, under which they can veil ſome uſeful truth: Without this, none merits to be called Poet; and Virgil himſelf would never have obtained that name, had he confined his labours to his four books of Georgics.

Thoſe who reaſon in this manner, are at no loſs to find ſeveral ancient authorities for ſupporting their opinion; they cite the example and words of Socrates: This grave philoſopher, in his laſt converſation with his friends, the day he was to die a martyr for truth, tells them, that in obedience to certain divine inſpirations, which commanded him to apply himſelf to muſic, he had compoſed, in priſon, verſes in honour of God. And afterwards, that being perſuaded, one, in order to be a poet, muſt compoſe, not reaſonings, but fables, he had put thoſe of Æſop* into verſe, becauſe he was not capable of inventing new ones †. Plutarch, after noting theſe words of Socrates, throws Empedocles, Parmenides, Nicander, and Theognis out of the number of poets; "becauſe (ſays he) we know there

* Plato in Phædro. † Memoires de Litt.

may

may be ſacrifices without muſic and dancing; but there can be no poetry without fables and lies. Caſtelvietto, who has acquired ſome reputation by his Commentary upon Ariſtotle's Art of Poetry, and who, in his bold deciſions, often ſhews more ſubtilty than ſolidity, pretends that the Georgics of Virgil do not merit the name of a poet to their author *, and that

* The opinions of different critics are infinite: Never was any one however more falſe than Trublet's, that verſification is the moſt important part of poetry: there is more reaſon even in Caſtelvietro's deſcription than the following ones.

Dans la proſe, ce qu'il y a de plus important, c'eſt le fond des choſes; dans les vers, c'eſt la forme & le ſtyle. Ainſi il faut plus de penſées & d'eſprit dans la proſe que dans les vers; & le mérite le plus eſſentiel de ceux-ci & le plus deciſif pour le ſuccès, eſt celui d'être bien faits, bien tournés: d'être bons entant que vers. Le principal mérite d'un poëte eſt d'être verſificateur. De-là, en grande partie, la préférence qu'on don-

that phyſiology can never be the ſubject of poetry; which, ſaith he *, was intended not to inſtruct, but barely to amuſe and entertain the groſs minds of the ignorant multitude.

Several very ingenious writers have imagined the eſſential principle of true poetry to be inverſion, particularly the French critic father du Cerceau. The vis poetica, according to him, conſiſting in ſuſpenſion. Now inverſion begets ſuſ-

ne à Racine ſur Corneille, la grande eſtime pour Deſpréaux, pour Rouſſeau, &c.

Eſſais ſur divers Sujets de Litterature, &c. tome iv. p. 178.

And again,

Dans la proſe, les penſées ſont de premiere néceſſité, le ſtyle n'eſt que de ſeconder. C'eſt tout le contraire dans les vers.

Eſſais ſur divers Sujets de Litterature, &c. tome iv. p. 190.

* Per dilettare e recreare gli animi della rozza multitudine. p. 29.

penſion,

penſion, therefore muſt inverſion be in the vis poetica, and conſequently the characteriſtic difference between verſe and proſe *.

But father du Cerceau never reflected that this principle of his was to extend farther than the French poetry: the Latins had proſaic verſes as well as we, were they only thoſe of Cicero; but why were they proſe? Certainly not for want of having their inverſions; for, according to the father, they would not have been affected by theſe, the order of the words being a thing of indifference.

The ſuſpenſion of the ſenſe is certainly a great beauty in verſe. It is likewiſe true, that this is often occaſioned by the

* Batteux's Principles of Literature, vol. i. p. 154, Tranſlation.

tranſpoſition of the words; but it is very extraordinary that father du Cerceau ſhould not perceive that this ſuſpenſion agrees as well with proſe as verſe. It is one of the fundamental rules of eloquence, firſt, to preſent ſuch objects to the mind as are capable of intereſting and attaching it; then to make it wait a while in expectation of the particular word which is to ſatisfy it, and terminate the ſenſe of the period. And, indeed, every one follows this as a kind of natural rule, who has a ſufficient freedom of elocution to enable him to expreſs his ideas in ſuch an order as is moſt likely to intereſt and attach the hearer.

Beſides, the poetic inverſions of which P. du Cerceau ſpeaks, are the moſt plain of any, conſiſting merely in the diſplacing of any two ideas, by putting the caſe go-

verned before the governing verb, which begets a much leſs degree of ſuſpenſion than the inverſions in oratory, where whole phraſes are tranſpoſed: and, indeed, it is rather the arrangement of things, than words, that conſtitutes true ſuſpenſion in every work of eloquence; theſe are diſpoſed in ſuch a manner, that the firſt introducing the reſt do either excite our imagination by their ſingularity, or our heart by the relation they appear to have with its intereſts, ſo as not to permit us to continue indifferent to what is to follow.

Laſtly, if inverſion and ſuſpenſion conſtitute the eſſence of verſe, then, wherever one or other of theſe are wanting, it is no longer verſe; but if this was the caſe, three parts in four of the verſes of our beſt poets muſt be eraſed; for in thoſe

thoſe of them which abound the moſt with inverſions, in twenty lines there ſhall not be perhaps twelve with this pretended eſſential character.

Although inverſion cannot be accounted as the eſſential diſtinction of poetry from proſe, yet all muſt allow that it is a very great enlivener of poems, and that there is but little enthuſiaſm of poetry where there is no inverſion; inverſion, properly and ſpiritedly uſed, has a great effect, and is much more common in poetry than in proſe: Therefore, altho', it aſſiſts in throwing the language off from proſe, and is one of the properties of poetry, yet it is not ſo eſſential as to form the characteriſtical difference.

The abbé de Batteux ſays, *poetry is the imitation of elegant nature, expreſſed by a meaſured*

meaſured diſcourſe. In this imitation, ſays he, are at once included, gods, kings, the ſimple citizen in his village, the ſhepherd in his field, and even the brute creation, as ſuppoſed diſcourſing with each other, or with mankind; poetry then muſt make theſe gods, kings, &c. ſpeak and diſcourſe in the manner they really do. This is the object of imitation: But as this is not a ſervile imitation of ſimple and common nature, but of nature ſelected, embelliſhed, and improved as much as poſſible; poetry, therefore, is not only to make its men and gods ſpeak as they *commonly* ſpeak, but as they *ſhould* ſpeak, ſuppoſing each in his higheſt degree of perfection. Hence it follows, that the proſaic ſtrain is that of nature ſuch as ſhe is; the poetic ſtrain, that of nature ſuch as ſhe *ſhould be*, i. e. of elegant nature.

This

This author's definition is incomplete, and of courſe his reaſoning falſe: Poetry is the imitation of all nature, as well as the elegant part of it; and the term *elegant* is here uſed in too extenſive a ſenſe; for there are many ſublime paſſages in the great poets, which may be ſaid to be natural, but not the imitation of elegant nature. Theſe ſhort definitions of extenſive ſubjects are almoſt always faulty and incorrect: He ſpeaks of the ſervile imitation of *ſimple* and *common* nature as an aim beneath a poet: I confeſs I do not underſtand ſuch terms, and I apprehend that many of the moſt ſublime and moſt beautiful ſtrokes in poetry are the imitations of *ſimple* nature, which wants no embelliſhments to render her real copies ſtriking to every mind.

The true and peculiar ſtamp of poetry is eaſier imagined than deſcribed; and while

while we enjoy the pleaſure of being carried away by the force of genius and the enthuſiaſtic raptures of poetic fire, we feel ſenſibly the difference between poetry and proſe, and are ſtruck with ſurprize at the attempt to confound them. Upon more mature reflection, we perceive that theſe two ſpecies of compoſition differ greatly in their manner of expreſſing the ſame ideas. Batteux juſtly obſerves, that in proſe the verb is put before the caſe governed; in poetry the reverſe always takes place. If the active voice is moſt frequent in proſe, poetry diſdaining it adopts the paſſive; ſhe is prodigal of her epithets, which proſe makes uſe of only on certain occaſions, and that ſparingly; and ſhe places them before the ſubſtantive, where proſe puts them after, and after where proſe puts them before. Poetry employs ſingular

for

for plural, and plural for ſingular *. She never calls men or things by their proper names; with her it is the Son of Peleus, the Shepherd of Sicily, the Swan of Dirce: With her the Year is the Great Circle, which is completed by a revolution of months. She renders the ideas more conciſe, deepens her colours, and ſuffers nothing about her mean or common, every thing is rich, every thing is full: Her way is ſtrewed with golden ſands, or covered with the choiceſt flowers. She takes a part for the whole, and the whole for a part. She inveſts ſpiritual ſubſtances with a corporeal form, gives life to the lifeleſs, and, as if ſhe was aſhamed of being within the ken of vulgar minds, invelopes herſelf with the clouds of allegory, recounts things but by halves, throws forth her ſtrokes of

* Princip. of Lit.

erudition

erudition in a haſty manner, and gives tranſient touches of places, events, and times, taking it always for granted, that thoſe who hear her are fully capable of comprehending her meaning. In fine, it is for this reaſon that ſhe even ventures to borrow foreign turns, to make herſelf the more remarkable, and raiſe herſelf above the common level. She deſcribes ſuch circumſtances as proſe paſſes over, and ſometimes even piques herſelf upon giving them very minutely and carefully; in all which ſhe has one end in view, that of raiſing herſelf above the ſtrain which is natural to the particular ſpecies in which the poetical performance is made; and any one of theſe ſeveral means is alone ſufficient to prevent the verſe from becoming proſe.

The true language of the paſſions is often the language of poetry; and when the

the imitation is complete, the poetic enthuſiaſm ſhines the brighteſt*. That inſtant any violent paſſion tranſports our mind, it likewiſe ſeizes upon our body, and ſpreads a ſudden diſorder through it: the blood flows with impetuoſity, the countenance is inflamed, the eyes ſparkle, the voice ſtrengthens; ſhort broken ſentences burſt out, one upon the back of another; the warm influx of animal ſpirits heats the fancy, and various thoughts rapidly crowd upon the mind: We expreſs them with all poſſible promptitude, and this impetuoſity does not ſuffer us to obſerve exact order in our diſcourſe: We no longer attend to the ordinary links of ſpeech: Our phraſes are bold and hardy; becauſe, being wholly occupied with what ſtrikes us, the terms we uſe do not appear to us hyperbolical: We break forth naturally into exclamations, apo-

* Memoires de Litt.

ſtrophes,

ſtrophes, interrogations; and we can addreſs ourſelves to inanimate things; becauſe in the trouble we are, all nature ſeems to us to intereſt itſelf in our behalf: Such is the enthuſiaſm of the paſſions, and ſuch alſo is the enthuſiaſm of poetry *.

But

* Every poet, when he firſt begins to compoſe, raiſes his imagination in ſuch a manner, that it may repreſent objects to him in a degree of perfection above vulgar nature. Inſpired by the preſence of theſe objects, ſtrongly imprinted on his mind, his ſtyle neceſſarily takes a dye above that of nature; and this dye is that of poetry, which conſtitutes the character of the verſe in all languages. This now is what we call *the poetry of the verſe*. To give a preciſe definition of which, we ſhall ſay, that a verſe is poetic, where it has ſome kind of ornament, be it of whatſoever nature; and when the meaſured expreſſion has a certain elevation, force, and grace in the words, turns and numbers, which is not to be met with in the ſame ſubject when treated by proſe: in a word, when it ſhews us nature enobled, enriched, decorated, and exalted above herſelf. Every one will allow, that there are ſeveral different tones or ſtrains, at leaſt, in the different kinds of writing.

But enthuſiaſm is not alone neceſſary to form true poetry; and perhaps it would be an endleſs enquiry to diſcover any ſingle eſſential property which univerſally diſtinguiſhes it from proſe. There are of theſe more than one: 1. Verſification is abſolutely neceſſary; there can be no poem without it*. 2. Inverſion is a great

Now the tone proper to each kind has other degrees of tones, which conſtitute the tones of the particular ſpecies; and in theſe ſpecies themſelves, there are ſtill ſubdiviſions for each ſubject in particular. The utmoſt poſſible perfection, then, of the tone peculiar to each kind, and of the ſubject in each kind, is what makes *the poetry of the verſe*.

Batteux Princip. of Lit. vol. i. p. 159.

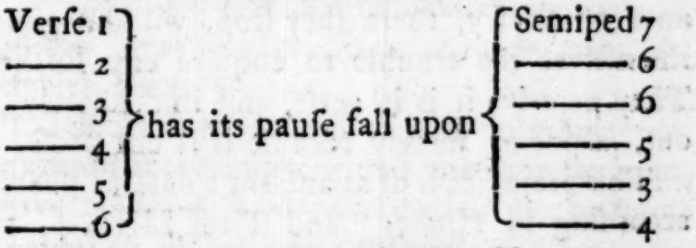
* That there is a *Charm* in *Poetry*, ariſing from its *Numbers* only, may be made evident from the five or ſix firſt lines of the Paradiſe Loſt, where, without any pomp of phraſe, ſublimity of ſentiment, or the *leaſt Degree of Imitation*, every reader muſt find himſelf to be ſenſibly delighted; and that, only from the graceful and ſimple *Cadence* of the *Numbers*, and that artful *Variation* of the *Cæſura* or *Pauſe*, ſo eſſential to the harmony of every good poem.

An

great heightener of poetry; and though not the eſſential property, yet there are few very fine paſſages in the works of celebrated poets without it. 3. As to fiction, in compliance to the opinion of ſome eminent critics, thoſe poems which diſplay a great invention, and a lively imagination, have more merit as poems than didactic pieces *, which are the product of

An *Engliſh Heroic* verſe conſiſts of ten *Semipeds*, or half-feet. Now in the lines above-mentioned, the *Pauſes* are varied upon *different* ſemipeds, in the order which follow; as may be ſeen by any who will be at the pains to examine

Paradiſe Loſt, Book i.



Harris's Treatiſes, p. 93.

* The multitude, ſtruck with the meaſure, which is ſo ſenſibly the characteriſtic of poetic expreſſion, and diſtinguiſhes it from proſe, give the name of

of reaſon and judgment: There is more poetry in the Rape of the Lock than the Eſſay

poem to whatever is in verſe: hiſtory, phyſics, theology, morality, and the whole body of arts and ſciences, which ſhould naturally belong to proſe, are by this means made the ſubjects of poetry. The ear ſtruck by a regular cadence; the imagination heated by a few bold and ſtriking images, which ſtood in need of being authoriſed by poetic licence; ſometimes even the art of the author himſelf, who being naturally a poet, may have communicated part of his own fire to matters otherwiſe dry in themſelves, and which appeared not ſuſceptible of any graces; all theſe things together, ſeduce and carry away minds but little inſtructed in the nature of things; and as ſoon as they perceive the outward appearance of poetry, there they ſtop, without giving themſelves the trouble to enquire any further: They perceive it is in verſe, and immediately cry out, a poem, merely becauſe it is not proſe.

This prejudice is of as ancient a date as poetry: according to Homer * and Titus Livius †, the

* Πολὺς δ' ὑμέναιος ὀρώρει,
Κοῦροι δ' ὀρχηστῆρες ἐδίνεον, ἐν δ' ἄρα τοῖσιν,
Αὐλοὶ φορμίγγες τε βοὴν ἔχον. Iliad. xviii.

† Tit. Liv. lib. i. Dec. I. Per urbem ire canentes carmina cum tripediis ſolemnique ſaltatu juſſit.

firſt

Eſſay on Man. 4. Enthuſiaſm is a moſt ſtriking ingredient in the compoſition of the fineſt poetry *: there are few poems of

firſt poems were hymns, which the people ſung, and danced to them at the ſame time. Now, in order to form a concert from theſe three modes of expreſſion, words, ſong, and dance, it was abſolutely neceſſary that they ſhould have ſome common meaſure, or time, by which they might all three be made to fall in together; otherwiſe the harmony would be quite diſconcerted. This meaſure then was like the colouring in a picture, which is the firſt thing that takes the eye; whereas the imitation, which is the ground or deſign of the piece, eſcapes a ſuperficial obſerver.

Batteux Princip. of Lit. vol. i. p. 91.

* Mr. Melmoth, with his uſual penetration and elegance, pays a due tribute to this great enliverer of poetry.

"I am perſuaded, indeed, that nothing great or glorious was ever performed where enthuſiaſm had not a principal concern; and as our paſſions add vigor to our actions, enthuſiaſm gives ſpirit to our paſſions. I might add too, that it even opens and enlarges our capacities: Accordingly I have been informed, that one of the great lights of the preſent age never ſits down to ſtudy, till he

of merit without ſome of it; but where it flows in a rapid ſtream, it ſtamps a moſt ſuperior excellence. There is little occaſion to define enthuſiaſm; it is that rapid force of lightning which renders poetry ſo forcible, which enflames in the ſublime, melts in the pathetic, and glows in the beautiful*. 5. All poetry ſhould be a juſt imitation of nature; whatever

he has raiſed his imagination by the power of muſic. For this purpoſe he has a band of inſtruments placed near his library, which play till he finds himſelf elevated to a proper height, upon which he gives a ſignal, and they inſtantly ceaſe.

Sir T. Fitzoſborne's Letters, p. 2.

* Let us therefore boldly conclude, that the poetical ſtile is none other than the natural ſtile of the paſſions; and when a diſcourſe in which that ſtyle reigns, is likewiſe adorned by the harnony of verſe, then it is called a poem, *i. e.* a *Work*, by way of eminence; and he who compoſes it is called a *Poet*, a word which does not ſignify an *Inventor* of *Fictions*, but only a *Worker*; as if it were intended to denote the moſt perfect workman, or one whoſe works are peculiarly admirable.

Mem. de Lit.

the

the ſubject, it ſhould be painted naturally.

Every reader will of courſe add thoſe qualities which may appear particularly to him: All theſe properties of fine poetry are found in the works of ſome poets; and in thoſe of others, none of them except verſification; which ſome may imagine the eſſential characteriſtic; but if they conſider that there are many pieces ſo devoid of all poetic fire as to be really contemptible, they muſt be ſenſible that this alone will never give the title of poem *.

I avoid

* But let none accuſe me of conſidering the verſification merely as an adventitious ornament; I look upon it, on the contrary, as an ornament that muſt of neceſſity add to nature: and as the partizans of fiction will not give the title of a poem to a thread of fables wrote in proſe; ſo I will not give it to a work full of enthuſiaſm, which is not in verſe. But it is ſo evident, that poetic beauty does not chiefly conſiſt in verſification,

I avoid drawing any abſolute and concluſive definitions of poetry, as I am very ſenſible that ſuch attempts ſeldom or never ſucceed to the ſatisfaction of judicious readers; and the more learning a man is maſter of, the leſs ready will he be to aſſent to general maxims. His experience in literature, (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) will remind him of the infinity of exceptions which are ſo often to be made to theſe conciſe definitions: thoſe who perplex the ſubject with needleſs diſquiſitions, only draw the reader into a labyrinth of arguments, where he forgets his natural ſentiments, and inſtead of them relies on his acquired taſte and critical knowledge: At the ſight of verſi-

cation, that how much ſoever the work of a great poet is disfigured, however it may be diſhevelled by a bad tranſlation, yet one will always find in it what Horace elegantly calls *diſjecti membra poetæ:* The members of a ſhattered poet.

fication

fication we naturally cry out a Poem! but on reading it why may we not, on diſcovering the total want of merit, reject its pretenſions? This method of proceeding will throw the determination entirely on the private taſte of the individuals, where it ought always to reſt; for no Ariſtarchus in criticiſm ought to expect his deciſions to paſs current with his neighbours, who have the ſame right as he to judge for themſelves; and perhaps with greater juſtneſs.—I apprehend the reader will not be diſguſted at the length to which I have drawn the ſubject, as I have left the concluſion of the argument to his own taſte and judgment.

GR. III. BR. MUS.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page.	Line.	For	Read
VOL. I.			
6	13	event	effect
99	13	would	ſhould
123	13	this	theſe
135	17	and all the reſt that we find in this treatiſe	and thoſe other maxims we find in Boſſu's treatiſe.
136	5	would	ſhould
137	4	theſe	there
150	3	works	words
153	*laſt.*	are	is
VOL. II.			
7	6	Shepherds have	Spenſer has
144	15	ſtrictly	directly
146	3	lap	lull
	laſt.	Metugan	Metregan
151	4	never	ever
163	20	benevolence	beneficence
VOL. II.		PART II.	
4	17	not be malevolence	not be with malevolence
13	16	wit	genius
46	5	*A reference wanting*	* See Mr. Spence's Polymetis.
50	8	compaſſion	Campaſpe
	12	aburdly	abſurdly
79	16	tract	trait
80	16	every	ever
82	16	this	his
	laſt.	If this work	If Emile
85	8	rule	rules
	19	and	which
134	*laſt.*	tracts	traits
137	19	juſt	jeſt
146	19	deſpenſe	diſpenſe
154	16	and to this the following words quoted above allude	and to this the following words allude
VOL. III.			
22	2	the one weakening	the one, and weakening
26	12	is a vaſt	is not a vaſt
145	*laſt.*	His ſon, M. Crébillon le fils, enjoys	His ſon, M. Crébillon, enjoys
146	9	Ecumoiſe	Ecumoire

VOL. IV. ERRATA.

Page.	Line.	*For*	*Read*
53	8	an	no
69	6	expreſſion	conception
70	7	This Slander enters.	This viperous Slander enters.
152	17	Oab	Orb
160	*laſt.*	equally	greatly
163		*For the metaphor mentioned from Otway, ſee p.* 164.	
164	19	Break	Bruſh
210	3	non	not

G.P. III.
BR. MUS.